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MARRIED BENEATH HIM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“LOST SIR MASSINGBERD.”

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I

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TO

ROBERT CHAMBERS, Esq.

THESE VOLUMES

(REPRINTED FROM THE PATRIARCH OF PERIODICALS),

ARE DEDICATED

WITH SINCERE ESTEEM AND REGARD.



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MARRIED BENEATH HIM.

CHAPTER I.

ON LECKHAMSLEY ROUND.

THERE are deserts in temperate England as in the burning East, although they are not of sand; vast stretches of undulating down, where you may drive scores of miles continuously (along that great green road whereon the scythed chariots of our ancestors once strove to mow the bristling crops of Roman legions down) without meeting a wheeled conveyance. Not a bagman's trap adventuring the short-cut over the hills between two country towns; nor a farmer's gig returning with its portly inmate, indistinguishable as to his features, by reason of his many "wraps," for the Downs are cold; nor a parson's, whose nag jogs on but

wearily after that indifferent feed at the workhouse where his master, too, has been sitting on "the Board" instead of *at* it; nor a doctor's—although that is the least unlikely of all—bounding over the ruts at speed as though the Ridgeway were the king's highroad, because he has been sent for to some lady in a situation delicate as well as almost inaccessible, and life or death may hang upon his speed. Equipages of any description, in short, are met but sparingly upon the Downs, even in summer-time, and when the air is clear. If some few traverse these wastes when snow lies there, they do it in company, starting early, and returning before dusk. Nothing marks their track save a stunted thorn or so; the crosses, deep-dug in the turf, cannot then be seen, which here and there show where travellers, in like plight with themselves, have perished miserably in some past winter, for the Down drifts are deep and dangerous. Anywhere but on the Ridgeway itself, indeed, it at all times behoves the wayfarer to know well the points of the compass, and to duly recognise the far-apart plantations that the tyrannous

winds keep so thin and stunted, and each of which, to the unaccustomed eye, is as like to the other as the chalk-pits whose unprotected rims gape hungrily where they are least expected. For mists will roll up from the well-watered valleys suddenly, and clothe the Downs in a mantle thick as Shetland wool. Happy the traveller who in such a case shall hear the tinkle from some flock of sheep, for they may be the joy-bells that shall bid him live. He may neither acknowledge this nor feel it, at the moment ; but when he has reached the flock (as, though he sees them not, he knows, by a scampering of many feet, set in motion by his approach), the shepherd tells him : “Thou beest lucky, man, to ha’ met wi’ me ; for else thee wouldst sure and sartin have got a broken neck.” And when the fog for a moment clears, it discloses to the astonished stranger a green precipice, towards the brink of which he was complacently tending, leading by a very short cut to the lowlands, and diametrically opposite to the direction he meant to take.

The shepherd is the only fellow-creature, even in

summer, who can be reckoned upon to be met with on the Downs. With that connecting link between the Human and the Ovine, his dog, for sole companion, he passes the livelong day among his sheep, rarely reading, rarely sleeping, rarely eating or drinking, rarely smoking, and—in spite of his composed countenance, and eyes steadfastly fixed upon the spreading beauties of the vale below—as rarely thinking. It is surprising to reflect how seldom a poet arises among this pastoral race, who seem to have nothing to do *but* to make verses. Ploughmen, whose attention is more occupied by their work, and whose minds are therefore less at liberty than those of these Corydons, have produced half-a-dozen bards for one of theirs. The profession seems to have exhausted itself in bringing forth King David. It still affects the Jewish harps, for we once found a shepherd playing *O Susanna!* upon one (not very long after London fell in love with the tune) under a wattle hurdle; and also slings, for our younger sheep-watchers often amuse themselves with a bit of leather and pebbles—an ammunition they are obliged to carry

in their pockets, since the Downs produce it not—in pelting the rooks ; but the art of versifying seems to have departed from them altogether.

If not poetic themselves, however, they are the cause of poetry in others. As one rides or walks over these hedgeless wastes, notwithstanding that a “barrow” full of Saxon bones may, here and there, awake an archæological fancy, or, in the hazy distance of the vale, a church-tower, or a fir-clump, to which we are at a loss to give its proper title, may attract our attention, the way is somewhat desolate ; and rich and ample as is the distance of the picture everywhere (for nature here purveys for us panoramas), we are glad to see a human figure in the bare foreground. There, then, lies Corydon, whistling some favourite melody, and plucking at the grass, like the sheep themselves, with his profitless fingers ; while his dog (by no means so elegant or sagacious a creature as its kin in the north) lies beside him, with its tongue out, panting from that last scamper after some ungregarious “woollen,” as though its heart would break, although quite unnecessarily, and perhaps

only with the view of impressing its master with a sense of its exertions, for if he does but move his hand, the dog will be off again like arrow from bow.

These two, we say, with their fleecy charge spread out on the hillside, are pleasant and poetical to come upon ; and the rough welcome of each is cheerful after that melancholy monotone of the peewit, which alone has greeted our ears hitherto.

If the Downs, however, be in some sort deserts, they have oases in them. Almost as suddenly as on the chalk-pits, we sometimes come upon a small sequestered village, sunk among them, like a lark's nest in clover, with a square-towered church, very old and very ugly, and having the appearance of an ill-shorn sheep ; for the ivy with which bountiful nature endeavours to clothe its nakedness, has been clumsily stripped off by ruthless churchwardens, in whose eyes devotion and the picturesque have no connexion, and who, if you spoke to them of Gray's "Elegy," would ask how much it was a bottle, and inform you whose preparation for destroying ticks in sheep *they* used instead. From the

Downs-top the church looks well enough ; but lucky for you, if its bell be going, that the winds are contrary, for there is an even chance that it is cracked, and a certainty that it will be tolling as though the Squire were dead, even though it be celebrating a marriage, since out of a single bell the best of ringers cannot evoke a wedding peal. There is often a pleasant local fiction that there are more bells, and during the last five minutes before the service begins, "the little bell" is said to be going ; but it is only the same bell differently manipulated—jerked. There are tall elm-trees, too, about the churchyard, which are a surprising sight to come upon, after the almost treeless track the traveller has pursued ; and the farm-steading beyond them, with its sturdy ricks, above which rises the dove-cot like a may-pole, speaks of comfort and plenty, in strong contrast to that barren way. And, indeed, under that moss-covered, gabled roof, there is strong ale to be had for the asking—that is, if a gentleman-stranger, like yourself, happen to look in—and if the master chance to be out with the key of that treasure, the

good wife will at least warm you some excellent elder wine, which, with sugar and toast, is not to be despised, look you, by one who has been blown about the windy Downs.

From the heart of this rich homestead there sometimes proceeds a self-satisfied purring sound, if you draw near enough to hear it, like that which Pussy makes when she sees all about her comfortable—the subdued whir of the winnowing-machine in the barn. On the other side of the churchyard stands the rectory-house, half smothered in ivy, and with a pretty garden, stocked with such flowers as can be got to flourish in that rigorous air and sterile soil.

The Squire's house, too, whether of greater or less pretensions, is sure to be not very far removed from the straggling street; for should an ambitious mansion raise its head above the sheltering brow of the hill, the slates would have a rattling time of it, and the rain soon penetrate into the attic bedrooms. There are commonly one or two farmhouses beside that principal one which we have mentioned; two little beershops

with very large creaking signs ; a blacksmith's forge ; a lollipop depôt, where boot-laces and postage-stamps are also sold ; and a cobbler's stall. These are the principal features of a village among the Downs ; and to them must be added the stocks, still bearing in these outlandish latitudes their human fruit from time to time—mostly at seasons of festivity—and placed for the public convenience as centrally as possible, and in full view of the churchyard, to which the culprit's face is always turned, in order, we suppose, to lead his meditations into the proper channel. In severe winters it is not unusual for the inhabitants of these retreats to be snowed up for days, so that no wheeled thing can reach or leave them, and when the snow melts, there comes a flood into the happy valley. Besides this, a casualty sometimes occurs, which is euphoniously termed “a rising of the springs.” Whatever be the cause, however, of this inundation (which happens without warning), the fact is that the cellars have more water than wine in them ; and if an inhabitant is in need of a little of his own sherry, he must embark in a

washing-tub to get it, and then dive. It is for these reasons that the footpaths are often raised three or four feet higher than the roadway, and that you sometimes perceive wooden bridges spanning nothing, and leading nowhere, as it seems, in summer-time, but which are not without their use at periods when "click, clack" go the iron pattens over the stones, and "slush, slush" the horses' knees in the choked streets.

The village of Casterton, which I have in my mind's eye at present, has many of these things in common with its sister-hamlets, while other features—which will, perhaps, appear anon, when there has been no such preceding glut of "description"—are peculiar to itself. Our story opens at a spot about a mile and a half from this place, high up on the lone and desolate downland, which stretches away, fenceless and limitless, on all sides, like an ocean or a prairie. Like a prairie, too, the earth is covered with flowers, but so minute as not to affect the colour of the landscape, which is grass-green everywhere, except where the shining chalk roads slash it with white.

Although it is early this summer morning, and the dew has not left the grass, two boys of about sixteen or so are sitting upon it—at the foot of what seems, and is, a mighty rampart circling away behind them—as though rheumatism was as difficult a thing to catch as hares.

“Willum’s late this morning,” observed the shorter but more thickly-built of the two lads, whose eyes had been fixed steadily on the village for several minutes.

“I wish you’d say William, Jack, and not Willum,” returned the other, laying his hand kindly on his friend’s shoulder, as though to avoid the appearance of offence.

“What’s the good?” replied the first speaker.
“Willum’s easiest. Everybody ain’t such a deuced clever fellow as you, Fred. Willum’s what father calls it, and Willum does for me.”

“But your father wanted you to ride Grandsire, which, he said, had done for him very well, and might for you, Jack; but nothing would serve you to go hunting upon that was in the stable, and he must needs buy for you that long-tailed, thin-legged——”

"There's not a better pony in the county," roared Jack Meyrick angrily. "I'll bet he shows *you* his tail the first time we go into the vale this year, my boy. Thin legs, indeed! why, everybody but a gaby would know that his legs *ought* to be thin."

"I didn't say they oughtn't," quoth the other laughing. "You know a great deal more about horses than I do, Jack."

"Ay, I believe you; I rather just think I do," was the unmitigated reply.—"Why don't Willum come, I wonder? Let us cross the ditch and climb the mound, and then we shall be sure to see him."

"Ditch! mound! Why, my dear Jack, don't you know what happened here?"

"Right well I do, lad. It was in this very place that we picked five-and-twenty pounds of mushrooms in one afternoon last year. Charlotte pickles 'em precious well. I like pickled mushrooms, I do."

"Ay; but I mean what happened here before last year—when every blade of grass was drenched in blood,

Jack, and spear and sword cut into the naked flesh of our fathers——”

“I don’t believe it,” interrupted Meyrick sturdily. “That’s one of the tales you are always making out, and repeating till you believe it yourself. Do you suppose my mother wouldn’t have told me if anything like that had happened to the governor? Pooh! And your father a doctor too! Why, who would ever have fought with *him* on Leckhamsley Round? It’s ridiculous!”

“I mean our forefathers, Jack—our ancestors. They crossed this fosse upon the naked bodies of their slain; they had only clubs for the most part, while they, upon the rampart there, were cased in armour, and had swords and spears. They say that thirty thousand Britons perished in this one trench, only a few hundreds in the next, and not one lived to reach the top of the mound. And yet the place is not a hundred and fifty yards away, and was protected by no other defence than we see now. Doesn’t that seem strange, Jack?”

“Ay, strange enough,” muttered Meyrick, with a

sigh, for historical allusion always oppressed him, as partaking of the nature of “lessons,” which he held should never be administered to a chap unless when at school, and it was now holiday-time. “But bother all that! I’ll bet you threepence that I’ll be on the top of the mound before you.”

“Done!” exclaimed Frederick, tossing his long dark hair as an impatient horse his mane. “There are some stones there—on the very spot, perhaps, where the eagles stood; we will see who can touch them first.”

“Eagles! Come, I’m not a-going to stomach *that*, Master Galton. I mayn’t be a bookworm, but I am not such a dolt as you would make me out. Plovers I’ve seen, and quails I’ve seen; but if ever an eagle stood upon Leckhamsley Round— Well, I’m not a-going to argey about it. One, two, three, and off!”

In half a minute they were neck and neck, nose and nose, at the stones that marked the summit of the Round, as the old camp was called at Casterton. No

wonder that the wily Roman fixed his station there. Four counties could his sentinels descry from it, and all the approaches from the country round. The two concentric circles of fosse and rampart were as plainly visible as though they had been dug yesterday, and must have been garrisoned, all antiquaries agree, by at least a legion. Jack Meyrick must have heard something of this, notwithstanding that he seemed so taken aback by his friend's historical enthusiasm, for the place was the Lion of Casterton. Mr. Morrit, the curate, Frederick's uncle, had even written a guide to it, containing such minute information that, if the ancient Britons had but possessed a copy, they might have known where to storm, and made straight for the general's tent without inquiry. After a little discussion as to who had won the race, which could not be settled satisfactorily, "I wonder whether Agricola was ever here?" muttered Frederick, musingly.

"I wonder what has got Willum?" returned the other impatiently.

"You remember who Agricola was, Jack, don't you?"

"Yes, to be sure I do—he's in that confounded grammar: *agricola*, a husbandman."

"Well, then, I am sure *he* was never here," exclaimed Frederick, surveying the smooth green flat, untouched by ploughshare, with a laugh. Fred was that very rare specimen of boyhood, a humorist—a wit of sixteen years old, and he felt it hard, as an older jester would have done, to have said a good thing without appreciation. Like most humorists, too, he had a sensitive nature, and fearing to have hurt his duller companion's feelings, by laughing at what he did not understand, he explained the witticism. Jack did not see it yet. He explained it the second time, and Jack saw it.

"Ah, I see," quoth he; "and there's Willum coming at last."

It was certainly very unsatisfactory for poor Fred.

William, Squire Meyrick's groom, and chief of the kennel, could now indeed be easily perceived trotting smartly up the long hill from Casterton, upon his master's grey. Why he should visit the Round at that early hour, since the old mare was by no means

in want of "exercising," and it was probable that her rider had little taste for the archæological; was not at first sight evident; but presently, between him and the village there appeared Bob, stable-help and master-of-the-dogs, accompanied by a lad still lower in the social scale, and by a long line of greyhounds. The morning was raw and even cold for the season, and each of the dainty creatures wore a sort of Liliputian horsecloth, in which it tripped along like any conscious beauty in her new mantilla. Now, one would pause a moment in such an attitude of expectation as might break a sculptor's heart in the vain attempt to copy it; or strain at the leash which held him, with his lustrous gazelle eyes fixed on the retreating horseman. When the latter had attained the summit of the Round where stood the young gentlemen, he made a signal with his cap, and the clothing was instantly removed from a couple of greyhounds; he blew on a silver whistle, and they were slipped and sped away towards him at such speed as scarcely a bird of the air could emulate. It was a beautiful sight. Their long fleet

legs were so swiftly laid to ground, that to the eye they moved not; they seemed in the distance to skim the turf like swallows; but as the competitors drew nearer, you could see the agile limbs make play, the neck and nose outstretched, but not too low, and all the wondrous work of bone and sinew. Mango and Mangonel! The two boys cheered as though a thousand others beheld the scene in their company, for the beautiful strife of speed stirred their hearts within them. "I'll lay a crown on Mangonel," cried Jack.

"And I on Mango," exclaimed Fred, in haste, lest, ere he could end speech, his dun should win.

But the dun did not win. Coal-black Mangonel first reached the living goal, William—well pleased to see his young master gain his wager—by just three-quarters of a nose. It was a great race.

"The mile," said William, looking at his watch, "was done in just one second less than by the brown bitch Mandragora. You mind her, Master Jack—she as broke her leg a jumping from the cart at Ashdown meeting. We had bad luck all that day."

Then there were more races, for the whole kennel was to be breathed that morning ; and upon each the two boys betted, and upon each young Meyrick won, who understood greyhounds better than *jeux d'esprit* and antiquarianism. “ Let us bet only half-crowns,” said he, after a little, either because he did not wish to take such solid advantage of his superior knowledge, or because he suspected the solvency of his debtor.

“ No, no ; crowns, crowns, I say ! ” cried Galton, impatiently, for his blood was up ; and since he had already lost more than he could pay, was, as is usual, exceedingly anxious to gamble. But even when he had the choice of dogs, poor Fred always chose the worse, save once ; and even then, when the swifter hound was his, and leading by a length, the creature fell, turning head over heels, in accordance, doubtless, with certain laws of motion, but very much in opposition to Master F. Galton’s hopes and wishes, and thereby was thrown out and beaten. One pound ten shillings is not a great debt, in the eyes of some young gentlemen ; but when one’s pocket-money is only half-

a-crown a week, and one has laid nothing by, it is unpleasant to owe it. Debts of this kind possess the disagreeable attribute of making you detest your creditor. One would not be sorry, somehow—though, of course, the inhuman sentiment is but transitory—if he should instantly be removed to another and happier sphere, through the dropping of a tortoise upon his head from an eagle's beak, for instance, or other painless and classical mode of sudden extinction. There would then be no necessity for paying such a ridiculously small sum as thirty shillings to his executors, or sorrowing relatives. They would, even, in all probability, be distressed at our offering to pay it. In the meantime, however, or in the event of the tortoise-accident not coming off at all, there is the cruel necessity of putting on a cheerful, nay, even a jaunty air, and looking as if, of Charles Fox's two greatest pleasures in this world, that of *losing* was to ourselves the most satisfactory.

Poor Frederick, as he paced homeward beside his late friend and the men and dogs, seemed to himself

like a captive in the triumphant procession of his conqueror, Jack. The parallel may actually have presented itself, and a Roman triumph along the Sacred Way have been pictured to his downcast mind, for it was imaginative in the highest degree, and well stored with rich materials ; but if it did, it was swept away almost immediately, and the simple mathematical expression of “—30” substituted in its place. The morning growing brighter and warmer momently, the elasticity of the down on which he trod, the graceful beauty of the animals that picked their way so carefully yet rapidly beside him—all those external objects, in short, which, under ordinary circumstances, would not have failed to give pleasure to Frederick Galton’s mind, as responsive to all such influences as the Aeolian harp to the lightest breeze, were now unfelt, unrecognised. The whole face of nature was obscured to him—as it has been to many a wiser and worthier man—by that dirty debt ; it was, for that matter, just as though he had carried the money in his eye. His tongue uttered “Good morning,” as the party came

to the bridge where the footpath struck away to his father's house ; but his heart went not with it. He thought it was the worst morning that he had seen for a very long time.

In this violent state of disapproval of the working of the whole system of the universe, he slammed the gate of the back-yard behind him almost off its hinges ; he kicked the dog that ran out to welcome him ; he scowled at the cook, who was engaged in no worse occupation than cleaning the potatoes intended for his own dinner ; and brushing quickly by the breakfast-room door in spite of the voice that hailed him so cheerfully from within, with "Fred, my boy, the muffins are getting cold," he ran straight up into his bedroom without reply. And all because he had lost thirty shillings, and did not see his way to pay the debt.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHOICE OF A PROFESSION.

IF Frederick Galton had been a lad with no particular mental inclination, it is certain that he would have grown up to be a surgeon. Before he was nine he had professionally visited all the neighbourhood within a radius of ten miles round Casterton, and was as well known as his father, the doctor. He only held the reins and sat in the gig, it is true, unless when he was hospitably invited to enter and be regaled with brandy-cherries, a favourite mid-day refreshment in the Down country, and excellently adapted to the climate ; but he was put in possession of the entire case as soon as the visit was over and the gig-wheels once more set a rolling. He got quite to associate that expos-

tulatory squeak which the Down gives forth when one drives over it, with pathological symptoms ; and to identify particular spots—long chalk hill-roads, for the most part, where enforced tardiness of motion begat verbal prolixity—with certain tedious diseases. It was a disappointment to the good man that his son evinced no passionate interest in these pre-*Lancet* narratives, as we may call them—for the best, that is to say, the worst, of the cases often found their way into the columns of that journal, and made the most private ailments of many an unconscious rustic the theme of European controversy, under the medical *nom de plume* of “Mr. A. a gentleman of phlegmatic disposition ;” or “Mrs. B. a lady of full habit.” The doctor would have liked to have seen Frederick’s leisure devoted to amateur experiments in his laboratory, or passed in company with the electrical machine at least ; and he was beyond measure distressed when Ponto (poaching) had the misfortune to get his near foreleg (it was very nearly “off”) in a gin, that the lad could not even be induced to witness the operation for compound

comminuted fracture, but shut his eyes, and closed his ears with his fingers.

It was surprising enough that Dr. Galton should wish his son to embrace a profession of the drawbacks of which he had had himself no little experience, but it was the case, nevertheless. If he had been a bishop instead of a parish doctor, he could not have dwelt more unctuously upon the advantages of his calling. Considering all circumstances, this liking, indeed, may be said to be inexplicable, save upon one hypothesis—it must be considered to have been a cerebral affection, and if we might have presumed to dictate remedial measures to a medical man, we should have suggested warm water for his body, and the placing of his head well under a cold shower-bath, until the symptoms abated. For the doctor's experience had been as follows. When Dr. Galton *bought* the medical curacy of Casterton, some twenty-five years ago, it returned him just thirty pounds per annum, paid quarterly. The Board of Guardians might have made a cheaper bargain with an inferior man; but such an advantage

in the medical profession is a scientific reputation, that they elected Mr. William Galton in preference to all other competitors, on account of his excellent testimonials. Besides this income, there was an extra allowance, averaging seven pounds a year, for vaccinations and midwifery cases ; and, moreover, the title of Doctor was conferred, not by courtesy, but because the neighbourhood knew no better. There were, however, two thousand people to be "attended" for this money, being at the rate of rather over threepence-halfpenny a head per annum ; while the parish being straggling, it was absolutely necessary that he should keep a horse. He had also to supply medicine gratuitously, which service was a serious item, because he had the misfortune to be an honest man ; otherwise, he might have stocked a small dispensary with diluted drugs and sick leeches at a reasonable figure.

The usual course of a parish doctor (not one of whom, not even the late Mr. Palmer of Rugeley, to their honour be it written, has yet committed the justifiable homicide of poisoning his entire Board of

Guardians), if it runs smoothly, and is not cut short, as it sometimes very naturally is, by debt, disappointment ending in drink, and moonlight departure without paying the rent, is as follows : He does his work among the poor (very hard work it always is, and aggravated in the Down country by fogs and snow-drifts) to the best of his power, and waits patiently, trusting and being trusted, for an opportunity of exhibiting his skill among the rich folks, whose housekeepers and servants are in the meantime his only paying patients, with the exception of a few farmers' wives. The farmers themselves are never ill, and their consorts often prefer to resort to a " wise woman " to cure their maladies. The county folks always send a mounted 'groom into the neighbouring town for old Dr. Pouncet, (in whom they have "great confidence,") and are shy of calling in a young parish doctor. Accidents and apoplexy, however, are both, luckily, of frequent occurrence in a hunting county, and these form the happy chances, whose skirts the new-comer must grasp, and, having grasped, must never let go his hold. It was a sudden emergency of

this kind which first brought Dr. Galton to the Grange at Casterton, and no other medical man was ever sent for afterwards to Squire Meyrick's. This was one of the oldest families in the neighbourhood, although, in social cultivation, from their having been buried alive, as well as dead, at Casterton for so many generations, not much above the rank of gentlemen-farmers. Squire Meyrick had, however, as great a disinclination to die as the most polished of fine gentlemen, and was probably quite as grateful as any such would have been to the man who, by God's help, saved his life. Dr. Galton had brought him home from what had been likely to prove his last hunting-field. When a gentleman of sixteen stone pitches on his head from the back of a horse of sixteen hands, the vexed question of whether he has got any brains or not, is in a fair way of being settled. Mr. Meyrick, by getting his concussed, silenced the voice of detraction triumphantly. His wife never forgot the saving help which the kind doctor had administered on that cold November evening, and the comfort he had spoken to her aching heart;

and she blew his professional trumpet for him ever afterwards, exaggerating, after the female manner, both the peril which her goodman had been in and the skill which had averted it; so that the doors of other “Granges,” “Halls,” and “Houses” in Downland were soon opened wide to the poor parish doctor, and had stood so ever since.

Whoever had seen Dr. Galton by their bedside in the hour of danger, was eager to send for him again in the like calamity. Not only was he—in spite of the discredit which the thing obtains among the fastidious Faculty—a really excellent “General Practitioner,” but also an agreeable gentleman. In place of the one dinner per annum with the squire, and the two with the rector, but too often the limit of hospitality accorded to his class—who are thereby driven to mix with a lower stratum of society, a clay that is but too apt to moisten itself with gin and water—he became a favourite guest at all the great tables round. The county families were quite delighted when Dr. Galton married Ellen Morrit, the curate of Casterton’s sister,

instead of some farmer's daughter or other person, "whom it would have been quite impossible, you see, for us to visit;" and strengthened by this alliance with the Church, and with no less than five horses in his stable (for his practice had grown so great as to demand that stud), he found himself, while still a young man, in a position which few of his order attain to at the close of a life's labour.

Mrs. Galton had died, however, within a year of her marriage. The widower's prosperity continued, but he cared little for it, since she no longer shared it. He had never loved worldly gear for its own sake, and would probably have retired from practice, had she not left him a son to profit by his exertions, the birth of whom had been the death of her he loved so dearly. At first the child had been almost hateful to him on this account; but as he grew up displaying the tender sensibility and affection, as well as much of the personal beauty of his mother, his heart seemed to yearn towards him, all the more that it had been at one time unjustly estranged. He could not bear to

send the lad to school, out of his sight and superintendence ; it seemed too hard that he should deprive himself of that one comfort in his desolate wifeless home ; to hear the boy's cry of welcome, to clasp his hand, to kiss his cheek, was all he had now to look forward to, during those long drives over the dreary Downs ; drives wherein for years the widower had bitterer companions than the wind and snow, in the unbidden thoughts of his own heart, wherein the love-light had been quenched so suddenly. But Time, a more certain if a more tardy healer than any of the Faculty, had mitigated even this grief ; and when Freddy became old enough to take his seat beside him on the gig, instead of a groom, his father's eye grew bright again, though never with the dancing merriment of his youth. In the innermost shrine of his heart's temple stood the veiled mute figure of his wife, and at times he would still retire there, to worship secretly ; but his son now filled the rest of the sacred place, and his hopes and wishes for him were constant as the ever-burning candles of the altar. In the ante-chapel, if

we may continue the metaphor, was admitted Robert Morrit, the curate, and his close neighbour, the only brother of his dead wife, and he who, next to himself, held her memory most in reverence. Dr. Galton excused himself, in part, for not sending Fred to school because Uncle Robert, who was a great scholar as well as a good priest, had volunteered for the office of tutor, which, up to the present date, he had discharged most faithfully.

“Fred, my boy, these muffins are getting *excessively* cold,” exclaimed the doctor for the second time, emerging from the breakfast-room into the little white-washed hall, and holloaing up the stairs to his offspring.

“Coming, sir,” replied Frederick cheerily, and it was no waiter’s answer, for, as he uttered it, he came, taking the staircase in three flying leaps. He was in the best of spirits now, for he had hit upon a plan for paying the thirty shillings; and indeed the thermometer of his spirits was apt to sink and rise between nadir and zero with a rapidity quite disproportioned

to any actual change in the temperature of his circumstances.

"Coming down stairs like that is the very thing to injure the *patella*, Fred; but I am glad to see you so nimble. There are very few things which denote a vigorous mind more certainly than activity of motion."

"Then Mr. Meyrick's greyhounds ought to be great geniuses, father: you should have seen them racing up the ground this morning; Mangonel did the distance in the shortest time, confound him; but—" The young man blushed and hesitated; he would not have let his father know he had been betting, for a great deal more than what he had lost.

"I am glad to see you blush, my boy. Why should you make use of such a term as 'confound him,' instead of 'I am sorry to say?' And why should you be sorry that Mangonel, of all dogs, should have won?"

"He is a black dog," returned the lad, "and I hate black dogs: the other was a dun."

"You like a *dun*, do you?" observed the doctor

dryly. "It is very few of us who can say so much as that." And the father laughed as one who does not make so good a joke every day in the year; and the son laughed joyously back again, because he saw his father was pleased. Fred loved his parent dearly, and (which is not always the case with even the most dutiful of offspring) always enjoyed his company.

We may respect, nay love, an individual very highly, and yet prefer a *tête-à-tête* with a far less worthy fellow-creature. There must be something of an elder brother, perhaps, too, of a sister also, in a man who would have his son to choose him for a companion; and this Dr. Galton had. Had the pair but been a little more similar in disposition—even in their faults—the boy would have reposed every confidence, every confession of shame and sin, in his father's breast, loving as it was as that of a woman, and filled with the large charity of a good man; but unhappily their characters had nothing in common. They were within a very little of that confidential relation (so often rendered impossible by the senior) which, once established between parent

and offspring, offers the surest safeguard to the latter to be found on earth ; but they had just missed it. Frederick was well aware that any vice, nay, almost any crime, would be forgiven by his father, if he did but confess it penitently, but he also knew that it would not find extenuation. Dr. Galton was much the reverse of a hard man, and would certainly be considered by most persons as an over-lenient one ; but his son, who knew him thoroughly (and who, indeed, young as he was, could read the characters of most men he fell in with), was well aware that the very inclination for certain vices—such as that of betting more than you can afford upon a dog-race—was wanting, and never had any existence within his father's breast ; that he would have called it by some harsher name than it deserved, and ascribed it, not to the excitement of emulation (which was the complacent view the boy took of the matter), but to some devilish impulse almost unknown to the human breast. The doctor was of a calm, quiet, even temperament, prudent, though far from worldly, unimpulsive, and undemonstrative.

Frederick was impetuous, enthusiastic, with feelings easily moved, and features that must needs at once express his feelings, even in the rare case of his obtaining the mastery of his tongue; passionate, too, he was, and self-confident beyond the warrant of his really extraordinary talents. A bishop's cob and an unbroken colt from the prairies would have made a less dissimilar pair. It is obvious that the latter must commit more escapades on the highway of life than his lordship's respectable nag, who would also be quite unable to account for the eccentricities of his yoke-fellow.

"Talking of duns," continued the doctor, "reminds one of years of discretion and responsibility. You cannot be passing such humdrum days, lad, all your life, as those you spend in Casterton."

"Why not, father? Why should I leave you and Uncle Robert? I am quite content with my nag and such coursing and hunting as I can get, I do assure you. If you are not desirous of getting rid of me, I would willingly remain here always, even if you

were not so good as to keep a horse for me. With bat-folding in winter, and hoop-trundling on the Downs in summer, I should be quite content."

"Hoop-trundling in your seventeenth year! I was really quite ashamed to see you and young Jack Meyrick yesterday going out with your hoops."

"Ah, but if you had been with us, father, you would have thought it capital fun. The wind was nor'-west, so we started them from the top of Kempsey Down; and after giving them two minutes' grace, my hoop was past the windmill, and Jack's rising the hill out of the bottom more than a mile away. When they came to ruts or roads, they would leap like deer. Mine took the Ridgeway in three bounds, upon my honour. We could scarcely have overtaken them, I do believe, if we had been on horseback. We had a run of just three miles, and found them not fifty yards apart in Whitcomb Warren. If they had not been stopped by the furze, they would have gone right down to the London Road."

"Well, that is better than going out with a hoop and a stick into the streets, Fred, I allow," returned the

doctor, rather carried away by this exciting relation ; “ but still a hoop-hunt is not a pursuit to last your life. What do you suppose Uncle Robert teaches you Greek and Latin for ? ”

“ Oh, that’s for the wet days, father, when, I suppose, I should be rather dull without my hoop.”

“ Ah, Fred, Fred ! ” exclaimed the doctor, taking him by the ear, and pinching it kindly, “ you are not going to get out of a serious truth this morning by any such show of simplicity. You know, you young dog, as well as possible what I am driving at, and you are moving that the question be put again this day six months, after the parliamentary manner ; but it is really time that this matter was discussed.”

“ Very well, father,” returned the boy, with downcast eyes, and fingers busy with the corner of the breakfast-cloth.

“ There is one way, and one alone, my lad, by which you may yet live all your days in this peaceful village, where, if there are no great excitements, there are also no temptations, and where you are as likely to find

happiness—the greatest happiness,” sighed the doctor, thinking of that one cloudless year of his own life—“as anywhere in this world. There would be an interval, of course, when you will be up in London learning your profession ; but after that you can return hither, become my partner, and indeed succeed to my duties as soon as you please. Even in case of your marriage, there is no reason why you should go elsewhere. We have lived too long together, I think, Fred, to have misgivings about dwelling under the same roof. I don’t think I could bear to part with you, my boy, even to a wife.”

Dr. Galton rose from his seat, blew his nose with unnecessary violence, and looked out of the window with intensity. Frederick followed him, and laying his hand upon his shoulder, whispered hoarsely : “ Is there no way of remaining with you but this, father ? Must I be a surgeon ? ”

“ Have you the same strange antipathy to my profession, Frederick, as when you were a child ? ”

“ Yes, father, quite the same. I feel I have not the

heart, the nerve, for this cold-blooded cutting and carving."

"Then you will not insist, of course, upon entering the army or navy?" interrupted the doctor, eagerly.

"No, father," replied the lad, with a smile; "although I do not think they are open to quite the same objection."

"Then there is the Church," continued the doctor with cheerfulness; for he had felt that his darling hope of Fred's embracing his own profession had but slight chance of being realized, and was comforted to think that the lad at least entertained no desire for roaming.

"You must go to college and get ordained, and then you can come here and help your uncle to do the duty, and take his place when he is gone (which God forbid however, should happen these many years); and thus you will be among old friends for all your days."

It was touching to watch the doctor's weather-beaten features as they brightened in the contemplation of this picture of his son's future. He already congratulated himself upon having secured the lad to himself for life;

he felt the comfort of having set him out of the reach of many dangers, temporal and spiritual, which never could assail him in Casterton, and of having marked out for him a sequestered channel of existence, which, since he had himself found deep contentment in it, he did not doubt was eminently suited to the happiness of his son.

“Alas, father!” murmured Frederick, with great unwillingness to efface the cheerful picture which he knew was presenting itself to the doctor’s mind, “I fear I shall never have a call that way.”

“A call, Frederick!” repeated the other, almost angrily; “I do not know what you mean. I am surprised at hearing you make use of such a vulgar expression, fit only for Ranters. I wonder what your uncle would say!” For Dr. Galton was High Church, as was his brother-in-law—a fact which was not displeasing to nine-tenths of the gentry round. We do not say that if it had been otherwise the doctor would have been Low Church, but it is certain he would have objected to the word “call” with somewhat less asperity.

Or perhaps the truth is, that parish doctors see so much of those who are in want of religion altogether, that they cannot distinguish between the more delicate shades of it, but take them on trust from the eyes of those who have greater leisure to draw fine distinctions.

“ Well, father, whatever we may please to term it, a man ought to feel something of that sort before becoming a clergyman.”

“ I am quite sure your Uncle Morrit never felt anything so very ridiculous. These ‘callings’ and ‘groanings’ and ‘movings’ are nothing in the world but peculiar forms of hysteria, sometimes, I believe, complicated by colic.”

“ Uncle Robert was, you know, in some measure compelled to take orders to retain his fellowship,” replied Frederick gravely; “but when he became a parish priest, he told me himself, that he began to think of ordination very differently. One does say, you know, in that service, that you ‘trust you are moved by the Holy Ghost to take this office upon you.’ ”

“ That’s very true,” returned the good doctor, who had

however, been by no means aware of the fact. "I am sure, my lad, I am the last person to force you into a profession for which you are not suited; but I confess I don't like the law."

"Nor I, father; neither law nor lawyers."

Fred was generalizing rather freely from the particular case of a country attorney who had lately managed to mulct his friend Meyrick (or rather the squire) in the sum of seventeen pounds, including costs, for breaking down a certain fence, which their ponies were unable to surmount, and in which offence Jack had been aided and abetted by Fred.

"There is nothing left *but* the Church, you see," observed the doctor, brightening again; "and doubtless, when you have been to college, and had your mind led to that subject for a year or two, you will think differently, and be able to take orders with a good conscience, after all."

Here the doctor's buggy came round in front of the window, which was a great relief to both the parties engaged in the above conversation. Each of them

dreaded that a conclusion should be finally arrived at contrary to his inclination ; and each of them trusted to time to effect his desired object.

" Perhaps it will be so," faltered Fred, " for no one can answer for himself so far ahead. I am sure I hope it will, father, for your sake."

The doctor kissed his forehead, which he had rarely done since the lad had been quite a child, and tolerably content, prepared himself for his long day's round.

Fred helped him into his greatcoat, buttoned the gig apron down when he was seated, and inquired whether he had his flask of sherry with him, which he would else have left behind. It seemed as though he could not do enough to show his anxiety for his father's comfort. When the vehicle at last departed, he watched it from the stone steps before the cottage-door, as it wound its way along the great chalk-track to the Downs. For several minutes, he felt ungrateful and undutiful to so kind a parent, who worked so hard and so ungrudgingly for him—not for not acceding to his wishes at once in the matter of the Church, but for

withholding from him his own secret intentions—his settled purpose of adopting none of the professions of which his father spoke, but something else, which he had long ago fixed upon in his own mind. “And yet,” murmured he apologetically, “what would have been the use, if I had told him? I know so well he would never have understood me.”

CHAPTER III.

DUMB MOUTHS.

THAT unexhilarating tragedy, the "Seven against Thebes" of *Æschylus*, was the book which Mr. Frederick Galton was to take up to his uncle and tutor that morning, and he revisited his bedroom to get it. As a grown man is known by the sort of companions he keeps, so the character of a youth is indicated by the furniture he gathers round him in his private apartment. If for the bell-handle he has substituted a fox's brush, and there are three hunting-whips in different stages of decay upon the mantel-piece, we are not surprised to find his library but scanty, and his edition of the poets limited to a sixpenny Warbler, containing what are called comic songs, but compared to which Methodistic hymns are lively.

If, again, everything is scrupulously neat, and the book-shelves arranged with a view of displaying the bindings, one may feel satisfied, even without finding a night-cap neatly folded upon the pillow, that the lad will never die of brain-fever, or attempt to revolutionize the glorious constitution of his native land. While, on the other hand, if a few devotional works acquire an undue prominence, and are ostentatiously left out on the table by his bedside, we would not answer for what he might do, nor on any account have the run of his private desk or secret drawers. Nay, if a slight tinge of tobacco lingered about a young gentleman's room, though at the age of sixteen, we should say that even in that early reprobate there lay less dangerous elements. Shall we suppose the case of a "few well-chosen water-colour drawings depending from the wall," and a "simple vase full of fresh-culled flowers upon the writing-table?" No; such things might be about a boy in a book, or a boy whose mother kept his room in order for him; but a real boy, left to his own desires, be assured, fair reader, never did surround himself with such delicate

elegances, notwithstanding much beautifully-written evidence to the contrary.

There were two pictures, however, in young Galton's room : the one an engraving of the greatest living poet of the time, for poets do yet obtain honour even in these days from the generation which is rising while they flourish ; the other, too, a portrait, and, like the first, of one whose living features Frederick had never looked upon—that of a beautiful girl, dark, and large-eyed as himself, and about two years older. This was his dead mother.

His collection of books was extensive and various. The ancient classics were as well thumbed as those of a "sixth form" at Eton ; partly because he rather liked them, and because he had been told (falsely) that through them lay the readiest path to the end he had in view ; but principally because his uncle loved them, and made them the objects of Fred's study. Nevertheless, he took that "Seven against Thebes" down with an unmistakable sigh. He hated what are called "Books for Boys" of all sorts ; but he would rather by half have borrowed Jack Meyrick's "Seven Champions of

Christendom," than studied that verbose uninteresting tragedy ; and he cast a regretful glance at the long line of English classics that stood invitingly above it, any one of which he would have greatly preferred. Shakspeare stood there, by no means as yet his favourite author, although he had begun to have a dim consciousness that in his plays were to be read the wisest and most wondrous things ever written by uninspired man. Not one in a thousand boys have the least love for Shakspeare ; the most they can in reality lay claim to is a blind traditional admiration for him—

The desire of the moth for the star, of the night for the morrow ;
The devotion to something afar—

and so far that they cannot get near enough, for the present, to recognise him at all. Very few grown men ever pore willingly over him, or read him privately for their own pleasure and profit. What they know of him, in spite of that voluminous edition, standing inviolate in their libraries, is from oral sources, and nearly all their quotations from him are at second-hand. They say that the great beauty of Shakspeare is that he

is so easily understood, and in that respect has so great an advantage over modern bards ; and as they do not blush during the delivery of this statement, we may charitably conclude that they believe it. If *men* therefore so rarely attain to the knowledge of Shakespeare, lads of sixteen — even of what is termed “genius” — are not likely to appreciate him very thoroughly. The boy in one of poor Mr. Leech’s pictures who remarks : “Aw ! Shakspeare ; I consider him a veway overwated individual,” uttered a sentiment in truthful accordance with the feelings of his contemporaries.

Master Frederick Galton was not indeed inclined audaciously to reverse the verdict of centuries, but for the present his Shakspeare was not dog-eared ; neither was his Milton, though he was very fond of poetry, and his knowledge of classics rendered that great bard more intelligible to him than to most boys. It astounds me to hear Macaulay telling us that Paradise Lost and Lycidas obtain a universal admiration. But Macaulay was a ripe scholar, when—at nineteen—he tells us so,

and he looked upon all things with a scholar's eye. Fred's Byron was thumbed enough, and presented by no means a creditable appearance to his library. Shelley was dropping to pieces, from being carried out of doors, and blown about by the Downs' winds, while the Song of the Skylark in the summer air was the music to the words of the book, and fed the young reader's soul with a double joy. Keats, with his paper binding fairly fingered away, stood naked and not ashamed by the side of Wordsworth, for that philosophic bard and great interpreter of nature to the heart of youth was in little better condition.

As for the prose—which is by no means so instructive a feature in the mental diagnosis—there were histories old and new, but no travels save Gulliver's, there was fiction in plenty, which was certainly not placed there for show. Smollett and Fielding (not perused, we fear, by boys for their Shakspearian qualities), Charles Lamb, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, all the humorists of modern time, in short, were there—that is, all that are within the mental grasp of a clever

boy; for there is a stilted and unfamiliar style about those whom the author of "Vanity Fair" has so pleasantly treated of, which makes them *caviare* to the young.

There was another book, neither courting nor shunning notice by its position in Fred's library, which it seems to me (however contrary it may be to the practice of the most elegant story-tellers) should not escape notice —namely, the Holy Bible. On that, as on others we have spoken of, the dust but too often accumulates as it lies on the shelf in our palmy days of youth and vigour. We hope, as Dame Quickly says, that there is no need to trouble ourselves with any such things yet, and are mostly content to hear it read at church or in the household, as though it had no particular message for our private ear. Frederick Galton was in this respect little better than the rest of boys. His Bible, however, did not stand with the other books, but on the mantelpiece, beside the picture of his mother; perhaps undesignedly, or perhaps because to the boy's mind—which was far from irreverent—it seemed to be the most fitting place for it. The top of the drawers was

littered with manuscripts in Greek and Latin ; but the table standing by the window—from which a great part of the straggling village could be seen, as well as the top of the Round we have so lately visited—had usually papers on it of another sort ; writings that were carefully put aside and packed in a drawer, when the occupant of the room was away, or popped into the big desk before which he sat, did any one enter while he was there. Although Fred was by no means neat in his ordinary arrangements, these sacred papers were folded and set in order with all care. Actuated by the sacred passion of paternal love, he watched over them jealously, for they were the first-fruits of his teeming brain. It is more than possible that the best thoughts in prose or verse there written might owe their origin to other literary parents ; but if so, he was happily ignorant of it. Perish the wretch who, with sacrilegious finger, would point out his error !

For consider, thou respectable Paterfamilias, who hast never beat about thy brain for the plot of a story, or wearied thyself in vain over the Rhyming Dictionary.

for a tag to a couplet, how it would be with *thee* in such a case. Suppose at a time when thy half-dozen olive branches are “down at dessert” as usual, and thou hast a few friends to dine with thee, that one of those guests should begin to find likenesses out of the family for each of thine unconscious little ones: a nose here, and a mouth there, a turn of the eye, or a hole in the chin, common to others of their acquaintance, who are neither relatives, nor indeed especial favourites of thine own. Would not such conversation be unpalatable to thec, and such innuendoes against thy lady’s honour insufferable? With indignation similar to thine own, then, would our young friend have met the calumnies which should question the originality of his “Hengist and Horsa,” a tragedy in five acts; of his “Amabel,” a melody; of his “Loves of the Village,” a satirical, and, indeed, a slightly-libellous prose essay; or of any other offspring of his brain, so many of which reposed in that great desk of his.

How lovingly he now lingers there, while selecting one or two to place in his pockets, embarrassed by

the number of the objects of his affection, like some amorous traveller who has been bidden by an eastern potentate, in gratitude for some great service done, to choose a wife from among the varied beauties of his harem. As one so tempted, if already married, might hastily divorce from his mind his European consort (residing at Wapping or other spot, whither the news of his infidelity need never travel), so Mr. Frederick Galton precipitately crammed the “Seven against Thebes” into his pocket, not without perhaps a fleeting mental comparison of the merits of certain ancient and modern authors, to the disadvantage of the former. His choice finally fell upon a translation from Horace, a few specimen chapters of a novel, the scene of which was laid in Punic Carthage, and a morbid and amorphous poem, called “A Frequent Thought;” and having carefully distributed these manuscripts about his shooting-jacket, he locked his desk, and ran, or rather leaped down stairs.

Mrs. Hartopp, the housekeeper, with a letter in her hand, met her young favourite as he rushed out

of the hall into the passage at his usual rate of indoor travelling when in good spirits, which was something over seventeen miles an hour. She was very stout, and the passage narrow, so that had not the young gentleman stopped himself upon the instant, a collision would have been inevitable.

“ Mercy me, Master Frederick, what a pace you do go about a house, to be sure! Cats is nothing to you.”

“ Don’t you know I’m a locomotive, and that you should always shunt yourself on to a siding when you hear *me* coming, Nanny ? ” replied Frederick, laughing. “ The law ought to be put in force which forbids any obstruction of the line.”

“ Line indeed! See, there’s your father gone, and I don’t know what to do about sending to the railway station. There’s my niece Mary, she writes, coming by the mid-day train—she as is going to help me, you know, a bit, and learn about mince-meat and such-like before she goes to live in London—and there is nobody to meet her, poor young thing. James has gone with

the gig, you see, and she has never travelled from home before in all her life."

"I'll meet her, Nanny," cried the boy, good-naturedly. "I'll bring her back in the sociable, as carefully as if she was eggs."

"*You*, Master Frederick? Certainly not. A pretty thing, indeed, for a young gentleman like you to be fetching the likes of our Polly. Although they do say (for I have not seen her myself since she was *so* high) that she is uncommon well-looking for her station, and, indeed, she comes of as good a —— Why, bless my life!" cried the old lady suddenly, and turning of a lively purple—for a great thought had struck along her brain, and flushed her cheek—"if it ain't carrier's day! Jacob Lunes will bring her, of course. I'll just run round at once, and catch him before he starts."* And Mrs. Hartopp tied her cap-strings under her chin in a huge bow, which was all the additional clothing she considered necessary for an expedition into the village at that season.

Nature, indeed, had taken the housekeeper under

her care in respect of temperature, having covered her with something more than plumpness ; while Art had seconded her efforts by bestowing garments of the warmest complexion as well as texture ; so that latest summer, even in breezy Casterton, had scarcely a wind to cool the good lady, and far less to give her a chill. Nevertheless, "Let *me* run, Nanny, to the carrier's," exclaimed the young gentleman, gallantly ; "I think I can run faster than you."

"'Deed, and you can do that, Master Fred," cried the housekeeper, laughing ; "but, thanking you kindly all the same, I'd rather go myself. You're late with your larning, besides, this morning ; and your Uncle Morrit is as punctual with his work as is our gray hen with her laying, and makes almost as great a clacking about it. So go along with you, like a good boy." And Mrs. Hartopp, gathering the folds of her dress together in front, after the female fashion, and knitting her forehead at the boisterous weather—which was her usual substitute for a bonnet on such excursions—stepped out upon her errand.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REV. ROBERT MORRIT.

THOUGH the Rev. Robert Morrit was ecclesiastically but the curate of a poor parish, his social position was good. He held a Fellowship at Camford, where he had taken an excellent degree—which set him in easy circumstances (provided he remained a bachelor) for life.

The living itself, which was in the gift of his college, would fall to him upon the demise of the present vicar, who was an involuntary absentee, and kept in a state of suspension by his bishop—the living and the village, as Mr. Morrit himself used pleasantly to observe, being both sequestered. The curate, as we have hinted, was an archaeologist of some reputation, and his love of antiquity extended to his cellar, where there was

as good old port to be found as in any house in the county. His enemies—for the good man was not without them—asserted that he had obtained that wine by dishonest means. He had, they said, taken an opportunity of revisiting Minim Hall (“a poor college, but mine own,” as he was wont to term it) at a time when its very limited number of young gentlemen were “down,” as well as their pastors and masters, and only a few weak-minded old Dons in residence, such as neither foreign nor home landscapes could entice from their combination-room during the long vacation. By these lonely old gentlemen, Mr. Morrit was welcomed with such enthusiasm that they produced some of that “twenty Port” for which the Hall had long been famous—although that priceless bin was fast diminishing—and he was rumoured to have repaid their hospitality thus.

“Why, bless my soul, this port is going!” observed he, as soon as he set lips to it.

“Going!” echoed the Principal—all the ruby liquid (not unlike the precious wine of which he was par-

taking) ebbing swiftly from his cheeks—“going where?”

“It’s getting sick,” quoth Mr. Morrit firmly: “the aroma is gone, the body is vanishing, and six weeks hence it won’t be drinkable.”

If the University Commission (an unhatched serpent’s egg at that period) had then been sitting, and had just decreed that half a year should see the end of Camford as an English university, the Principal, the Bursar, and the third fellow of Minim Hall, then present, could not have been possibly placed in a lower stratum of spirits.

One sipped his wine like a sparrow; the tongue of another flickered like that of an ant-eater about the brim of his wine-glass; the eyes of the third grew dazed with staring at the shining liquid as he held it up between him and the sun. They began to imagine that there really was something excessively wrong about that port.

“I wish to goodness Hickup was here; but he’s in Petersburg,” observed the Bursar, sighing. “I am sure

I don't know: it certainly does taste queerly Morrit, now you mention it."

"Deuced queerly," assented the third Fellow, who nevertheless, had had several glasses.

"What are we to do?" inquired the Principal. "It will be ten thousand pities to let it spoil in the cellar."

"Drink it," said the third Fellow, decisively.

"Then we must telegraph to Hickup, or he will have a fit when he comes back and finds it gone. Now what do you advise, Morrit?"

"Well, you see, it's no affair of mine; I'm so seldom up: but if I were in *your* place, I should say, 'Sell it,' sell it to somebody who can give a long figure for it, and afford to drink it quickly."

"We have been offered eight guineas a dozen for it," observed the Bursar; "and we have got more than twelve dozen left. I suppose a dealer would not look at it, however, if it is really going."

"If a wine-merchant tastes that wine, you are done," observed Mr. Morrit, gravely. "These things get about

like wild-fire. The best way will be for one of you to buy it for your private cellar."

The three Dons looked at each other inquiringly. The Principal was a married man, and dared not do such a thing. The Bursar was not so particular about his drink as to feel inclined to pay any great sum for it. The third Fellow pertinaciously adhered to his original idea that they should drink nothing else until the "twenty" port was gone.

"I tell you what," observed Mr. Morrit, good-naturedly, "I'm only a curate, and not a rich man; but sooner than see my old college suffer such a loss as this, I'll take the wine off your hands myself, at five pounds the dozen. My Downs' friends are all port drinkers, and we shall manage to get through most of it, I dare say, while it's pretty good."

The Principal and Bursar were for embracing this proposition, as well as the generous being who had so sacrificed himself, and the Rev. Robert Morrit would have got clear away with the whole bin, but for the dogged pertinacity of the third Fellow, who insisted

that there should be left enough to last them at the rate of a bottle a day until the other men came back. The curate, however, secured eight dozen ; and there was a goodly portion still remaining in his Casterton cellar at the date of our introduction to him. Perhaps the change gave it body and improved it. But Professor Hickup, who only returned to Minim Hall in time to taste the very last bottle, protested, with many strong expressions unfavourable to the late purchaser, that the port was as good port as it had ever been ; and upon the truth or falsehood of that verdict rested the charge made against the curate of Casterton.

Far be it from us to rank ourselves with the reverend gentleman's accusers ; but there certainly was a humorous twinkle about his eye, and a dry wise smile about his mouth at times, which would almost befit the hero of such a story. He was not nearly so great a favourite with the gentry in his neighbourhood as was his brother-in-law, and indeed they were a little afraid of him ; but the poor, for the most part, although not without exceptions, loved him. He was more kind and

gentle in his manner to their women than the patronising and would-be charitable ladies, who gave themselves airs, and could not stand the closeness of a labourer's cottage. But he hated poachers and dissenters mortally—the latter of which wicked class were numerous in Casterton—and entertained a somewhat foolish and unreasonable family pride. An unhappy cousin of his, “removed” by ever so many genealogical branches, but who happened to bear his name and live in his neighbourhood, was the bane of the curate's existence, because he chose to consort with indifferent characters, and to be drinking himself to death with ungentlemanlike rapidity.

Mr. Morrit's mind was originally of an antique cast, and had been so warped in the backward direction by a long collegiate course of training, that he was really incapable of appreciating modern things. New potatoes and new milk, he was wont to aver, were all the novelties he ever wished to have about him; although it is doubtful whether his favourite study-chair, spring-hung, and moveable from within, or the patent reading-lamp,

that fitted into the arm thereof, were of that indistinct and far-back period from which alone, as he would have it, all excellent things originated.

A man of modern letters, who met Mr. Morrit at dinner for the first time, might have come away with the idea that that gentleman was semi-idiotic, as well as dowered with those malicious and snarling qualities so often inherent in persons of inferior mental capacity.

Master Frederick Galton, however—who, as we have said, was a pretty good judge of mankind for his years—was by no means of that opinion, and a very honest friendship existed between these two relatives. Mr. Morrit, who hated subservience so far as himself and his own belongings were concerned, and who perhaps did but profess Toryism as some men do Radicalism only that they may the better exercise their personal independence, perceived in his nephew none of that tendency to lip-service which his fastidious eye detected in his brother-in-law, though it was, after all, may be, nothing but that professional suavity with which no doctor, unless he be a man of acknowledged genius, can

afford to dispense ; while he gradually beheld his beloved sister renewed in the delicate features and gentle disposition of her son. The boy, on his part, revered the old-world knowledge that his uncle possessed, and appreciated his sarcastic humour, even when he himself was the object of its sting. Nevertheless, he entered the curate's study that morning with the "Seven against Thebes" in his hand, and the other three efforts of genius in his pocket, not without misgiving.

"What!" cried his uncle, perceiving unwonted dejection in his looks—for the boy was accustomed to climb Parnassus with his tutor with exceeding cheerfulness—"is it possible you don't take to the 'Seven,' Fred? Has that modern trash, which your father suffers you to read, corrupted your taste?"

"No, sir," answered Frederick (the "sir" being that sort of Addison-patriarchal style which especially pleased his uncle) ; "the 'Seven' is very well, but"—

"*Very well!*" exclaimed the idolater of the classics. "What the dickens do you mean by such an impertinence as that? Is there anything in your Byrons

and the rest of them to compare with it? Is there anything *like* it, sir, to be found among the whole lot of your now-a-day poet-tasters?"

"Nothing, sir; nothing in the least like it, I do assure you," returned the lad with intense gravity.

Mr. Morrit carried his double-barrelled gold eye-glasses slowly to his eyes, and surveyed the youth for a full minute without speaking. "You know, my boy," said he at length in a gentle tone, "there is always a certain *tedium* for all parties concerned about a siege."

"Yes, sir; and there is a *Te Deum* for one of them, at least, when it is finished."

"Very good, Fred. That is a very pleasant epigrammatic method of intimating that you are tired of the 'Seven.'—Now, can you tell me after what protracted siege is it probable that a *Te Deum* was first performed?"

The young man stood thoughtful and serious as became one who was employed about a great historical problem, although he was aware, by the twinkle in his uncle's eyes, that a joke was pending. "I have got it,

sir!" exclaimed he at last, with his face like the sun bursting through a cloud. "It must have been the siege of Tyre that produced it." And the curate and nephew laughed together in a manner pleasant to behold.*

This almost mechanical quick-sightedness for humorous allusion was one of the strongest bonds, perhaps, that united Mr. Morrit and his nephew; for out of such sort of sympathetic material, alas!—and still lower sorts, descending, in some cases, even to a common liking for strong drinks, rather than of the strands of a common faith, morality, or what great principles you will,—are the bonds of human friendships formed. There was nobody in all Casterton, nor in many a square mile around it, who was eligible to join that MUTUAL ADMIRATION SOCIETY of which the Rev. Robert Morrit and

* The worthy reader who does not perceive this joke at sight, is requested to pass on without inquiry. Minute investigation is earnestly deprecated. You have missed an excellent shot, friend, but do not, on that account, go poking after the bird again. Even in the case of your coming up with him at last, you will be sure to be disappointed with his size and plumage. A *jeu d'esprit* is a kind of game which is only beautiful when it is first flushed.

Master Frederick Galton were the sole members. On this account, the good priest was blinded to a greater extent than he was aware of, to the faults of his young parishioner and relative, and disposed to favour his inclinations; of which circumstances the youth, on his side, was by no means slow to take advantage.

It was through Uncle Robert's solicitation that a horse in the doctor's stable had been set apart for the lad's particular use; that he had been permitted to take to "stick-ups," and had discarded jackets at least a year before those superficial changes had seemed necessary to his father and Mrs. Hartopp; and that he had discontinued the study of the low mathematics formerly imparted to him in private by the village schoolmaster between the hours of seven and eight P.M. Nay, a stray expression now and then from the curate had doubtless helped to dissuade the doctor from pressing upon his son more strongly than he did the adoption of his own profession; and it was to the uncle rather than to the nearer relative that the young man

was now about to unbosom himself fully upon that very subject.

Frederick had been watching for his opportunity since he had entered the curate's study that morning, and the siege of Tyre seemed to have afforded it, by putting his uncle in the best of humours.

"My father and I have been having a little serious talk this morning, sir."

"Ah, choice of a profession, I suppose, and all that sort of thing. You have come to the epoch when that unpleasant matter can be no longer shirked. Well, and how do you like the idea of being a saw-bones? Splendid prospect that calling affords you, does it not? Look at Galen, Dr. Sangrado, Dr. Faustus, Dr. Fell, and Sir Astley Cooper—names that are familiar to us all as household words. The lancet of the surgeon, lad, is as honourable, at least, as the weapon of the cavalry officer, while it is never used to destroy the lives of our fellow-creatures but to save them. What other things were said, Fred, in favour of Saw-bonism besides these?"

"Nothing; not even those, sir; although, if they had been dwelt upon, there is no knowing but that I should have been persuaded. As it was, my father said that he was sorry, but that he would never force my inclinations."

"Very good, very kind, and very right, Fred. And to what did you say that your inclinations pointed?"

"Well, sir, I—I—" and the usually voluble youth blushed and stammered, and was actually at a loss for a word.

"What remunerative calling did you hit upon? Come, out with it, lad, and don't be ashamed. Did you say you would be a poet?" and the middle-aged gentleman chuckled and rubbed his hands at the absurdity of the idea, while his nephew stood secretly fingering the translation from Horace, and the original verses of a morbid character, as they reposed in his coat-pocket.

"I said I would go to college, and perhaps into the Church"—

"It is usually termed taking holy orders," interrupted Mr. Morrit, drily.

"Well, sir, I said that I would do that, if—
if"—

"If you were driven to it, and could not help yourself; quite so. Allow me to thank you, in the name of the cloth," said the curate, taking off the velvet head-covering which he wore in his study and while solemnising funerals in windy weather, and which his enemies did not hesitate to call his smoking-cap. "This patronage of my humble profession is as unexpected as it is flattering."

"My father wishes it, sir," returned the lad, no longer hesitating, but in a tone of great annoyance; "and I shall do my best to gratify him; but my inclinations, I own, point very strongly to literature."

"Ah," replied Mr. Morrit, rubbing his chin, which was always a sign with him of intense dissatisfaction. "I see; they point *not* to holy orders, but to literature. The two things being quite incompatible, and wholly different, it would be a sad thing if a young man of your brilliant parts were lost in the ranks of an ignorant and boorish clergy. You entertain no apprehension of

that kind—good; although, perhaps, you only say so, to spare my personal feelings. Then, what is the literature which you have in your eye, my young friend? The art of writing libels which are not actionable, under the name of ‘leading articles’—leading forsooth, a pack of blind fools into a ditch? Or are you for the serial business of the halfpenny journals? It was only yesterday that I saw the ‘Mysterious Murderer of Middlehampton, or the Midnight Yell,’ advertised in letters of appropriate crimson upon the village stocks. You speak as though you were yourself the talented author of that work; if you are, I congratulate you, and will take in the *Family Nuisance*, or whatever the name of the periodical is, until the thrilling narrative is concluded; that is to say, if you confine it within reasonable limits, for I have heard that it is considered injudicious to let these serial romances come to an end at all. You are an honour to our family,” added the curate, fairly exploding with indignation, and as though all that he had said before was but as the powder-train that led to the mine—

"you are an honour to our family, Master Frederick Galton, upon my soul you are!"

"I came here, sir, this morning," replied the young man, with a forced calmness and vermillion cheeks, "under the mistaken impression that I should obtain from you, if not some sympathy, at least some good advice. I wish, now, that I had stopped at home, or held my tongue, and so at least have avoided insult."

Mr. Morrit's little splutter of family pride, compared with the indignation that glowed in the young man's features, and even lit up his very form, was as a farthing candle to a Bude-light, and paled at once its ineffectual glimmer.

"Pooh, nonsense! Who wants to insult you, lad? I am an old fogey; and perhaps some of my judgments upon modern matters may be a little harsh—there." And the curate made a wry face, as though he had told a falsehood for the sake of peace and quietness. "Of course I was angry at your thinking of this scribbling being your sole profession. You may be a lawyer, soldier, parson, and still keep up any

connexion you may have formed with the *Family Nu*—, with the periodicals, I mean, devoted to the intellectual elevation of your fellow-creatures.”

“I have promised my father to be a parson, if anything, sir.”

“Very well, then. Go to the University ; and when you have mixed with the best society there, and have got a little older, you will be better able to judge for yourself as to what is likely to suit you. The training cannot hurt you, at all events, but will either fit you for a pulpit, or purify and classicise your style for”—Mr. Morrit seized his chin with both his hands, but took them away again—“for modern literature.”

“I am quite prepared to follow your directions so far, sir ; but I must begin with literature at once.”

“By all means,” returned the curate drily, but cheerfully ; “here is half a quire of foolscap and a bundle of goose-quills, and you may take both home with you.”

“I have begun already, sir, as far as manuscript is concerned,” replied Frederick naïvely. “I want to see myself in print, and, particularly, to make some money.”

Mr. Morrit was far too wise a man to ask what his nephew could possibly want money for in a place like Casterton. His nature, too, though sarcastic and rough, was not without that innate delicacy which respects even a child's feelings, and without which no man is fit to wear the name of gentleman.

"My purse, you know, Fred, is quite at your disposal of course," said he, turning round to poke the fire, in order to disembarass the young man as much as possible. He was well aware, from observations made at college, that your borrowers do not relish being stared at.

"Thank you kindly, uncle," returned the boy, greatly mollified ; "but I do not wish that."

"You are in want, then, of a medium of publication?"

"Yes, sir."

"Will you let me look at these buds of promise, Fred?" said his uncle, smiling—"at those papers, I mean, with which you have been fumbling in your pockets all this time; or perhaps you will read them yourself?"

"No, sir—not now," answered the lad firmly. After the indignities he had suffered, he had not the heart to read his specimen chapters of the novel concerning ancient Carthage, nor his translation from Horace, and far less the poetical fragment, which he knew was morbid ; nor, indeed, did he consider his uncle to be in a frame of mind adapted for their appreciation.

"What are the names of them, Fred?" inquired Mr. Morrit, again bestowing his particular attention upon the fire.

Frederick rehearsed the barren titles rather sheepishly.

"Is the story about ancient Carthage a tale of real life?" inquired the curate, innocently ; but his nephew could not but perceive the shoulders of his venerable relative shaking with inward merriment.

"I suppose so, sir," answered the young author, tartly.

"And has it been perused by any one save yourself? Has it had the advantage of any disinterested person's critical eye?"

Now, the only individual who had really been indulged with a glance of the Carthaginian story was Mrs. Hartopp, the housekeeper, to whom Mr. Frederick Galton was accustomed to confide his literary efforts, after the fashion of Molière. It was true, she admired them all to enthusiasm, but Fred was more than doubtful whether her eye could strictly be termed "critical;" so he replied: "No, uncle."

"Very well, my boy; it so happens that I can assist you in your little difficulty. A fellow of our college, who was never good for much, and got dissatisfied with the quiet mode of life pursued at Minim Hall, went to London to 'read for the bar,' as the phrase goes. Either he did not read enough, or the bar didn't care for his reading, for he soon turned his gigantic intellect into another channel. He became an author of some little celebrity, and eventually the conductor of a magazine. The name of the thing is, I believe, the *Paternoster Armadillo*"—

"*Porcupine*, uncle—*Porcupine*. I know it quite well. It has generally one or two good stories,

and now and then some excessively satirical reviews."

"Ay; is it possible that those can be the thunder of Gory Gumps? I forget why we called him by that name at Camford, his real name being Jonathan Johnson; but we always did so. Now, I dare say he will know what sort of articles are in demand as well as anybody, and I will ask him down about Christmas to have a talk with you, Fred. We shall all come out in the *Porcupine* afterwards, I do not doubt; but we cannot expect so eminent a person to visit us without our paying for it. Gory Gumps will come, I am certain, because he knows about my port."

Fred's countenance flushed with delighted thankfulness as he replied: "Thank you, uncle; I am sure I shall never forget your very great kindness."

"Ah, but you will, Fred," returned the curate grimly, "and fifty other kindnesses of far more importance, if you have the luck to meet with that number. You are sixteen now, which is the epoch of gratitude; the time when you feel inclined to make over your whole

property to anybody who happens to lend you an umbrella in a hail-storm—but that only lasts a little while."

Fred remembered, not without wincing, that he had more than once felt inclined to sacrifice his life in return for very inconsiderable benefits, and in particular, that he had been revolving in his mind quite lately a scheme for laying some of his worldly goods, when he should come to possess any, at the feet of a great social reformer, whose literary works had attracted his ardent mind. How many an impulsive youth has experienced the like generous yearnings, and yet, alas ! how few the social reformers who have ever got the money !

With years we gain worldly wisdom ; but for that we must barter many a trustful feeling, many a chivalric resolve, and be content to perceive many a vision splendid "die away, and fade into the light of common day."

"Well, uncle," replied Frederick laughing, "If mine be the only age for the proper appreciation of benefits,

it is as well that I should now obtain as much of them as possible ; so, until Mr. Jonathan Johnson of the *Porcupine* comes, will you lend me five pounds ? ”

A youth of equal impulsiveness but less sagacity would have asked for exactly the sum requisite for his present needs, but Master Frederick Galton was not the boy to put himself under an unpleasant obligation (for there is only one uncle in the world, and common to the whole race of civilised mortals, whose loans imply nothing of favour) for the miserable consideration of thirty shillings.

“ There then,” cried the curate, handing the lad the money ; “ and I will excuse you your note of hand.”

“ I have one more request to make yet, uncle—that you will say nothing for the present to my father about my choosing literature for my future profession.”

“ Certainly I shall not,” replied Mr. Morrit curtly ; “ and, indeed, I sincerely hope that he may never need to hear of it at all. Till Christmas comes, Frederick, we ourselves will talk no more of it, for I would much rather that we should agree with one another, lad,

than quarrel. There is no time now for the ‘Seven against Thebes’ this morning, for I am going out hawking with the Tregarthens in half an hour.”

“ Is there hawking to-day, sir ? ” cried the young man, starting up with an expression of disappointment: “ and there’s *Bolus* with his off fore-leg so swelled that I dare not take him out.”

“ Come out on *Tentoes*, then—on *Shanks* his mare, as Squire Meyrick facetiously calls it. The meet is at Whitcombe Warren. A lad like you should be able to run by the side of my cob at his best speed, and besides, you shall take hold of my stirrup-leather.”

CHAPTER V.

A DAY'S HAWKING AND ITS RESULTS.

"THE clouds are hanging low, Fred," quoth Mr. Morrit, as his stout cob clattered along the ill-paved village street; "I fear we shall have wet jackets before the day is over."

"Here comes the weather-wise squire trotting after you," returned the lad, from the raised foot-pavement: "for a man who so seldom rises above the earth, his information as to what is coming from the skies is marvellous."

Thereupon up rode Mr. Meyrick—a weather-worn gentleman of sixty, whose face would have been eminently handsome, had not nature omitted in it the element of expression altogether—in spotless cords but with a shooting-jacket as black as the parson's,

and a hazel switch in his hand in place of a hunting-whip. "How are you, Morrit? How are you, young gentleman?" (the latter salutation being by no means so cordial as the former, for he was suspicious of youthful bookworms, and perhaps a little jealous of Frederick's well-known superiority to his own boy).

"I am hanged if I know what I ought to put on for such a sport as this. One can't wear one's coursing uniform, nor yet the green coat one uses for the thistle-whippers."

As a fox-hunter, Mr. Meyrick had a supreme contempt for the hounds called harriers, and indeed for most pursuits and pastimes except fox-hunting; but Mr. Tregarthen had sent round to give notice that his hawks would be flown on this particular day, and the squire had made a point of attending the sport, as a personal favour to that gentleman.

"Put on your red coat, man," replied the parson, gravely; "scarlet is the only wear for hawking in."

"My *red* coat!" replied the squire, with indignation. "I'd like to see myself riding after yon carrion kites

in pink." And indeed the donning of that sacred attire for such a purpose—stained at the tails though the garment was, as though it had been used for pen-wiping—would have appeared to Mr. Meyrick no less a sacrilege than the turning out in full canonicals after a fox would have seemed to the Anglican curate.

"Your ancestors, however, were wont to hawk in coloured coats before now," returned Mr. Morrit; "and perhaps in this very Chalcote Bottom to which we are now bound. The ancient Britons, they say, first taught the pastime to the Romans."

"Ay, ay, but that was in very old times," quoth the Franklin apologetically, but not a little gratified, too, with this reference to the antiquity of his race.

"Yes, sir," interposed Frederick, laughing, "and their coats were for the most part coats of paint. On a day such as this is like to be, you might have gone out as brave as a rainbow, and yet returned washed-out, to the homeliest flesh-colour, with nothing but a draggled feather in your hair to distinguish you from your humblest tenant."

This picture of Mr. Meyrick's return from hawking in the olden time set the curate shaking with inward merriment; but the squire was by no means so well pleased, and began to mutter certain statements of what he would have done with any impudent young jackanapes, if Providence had seen good to curse *him* with a son of that description. It was perhaps well for the general harmony that his own offspring at that moment, mounted upon the long-tailed *Lightfoot*, came galloping up, at sight of whom the ire of the old gentleman gave place at once to parental admiration. The lad, indeed, was good-looking enough, and rode like a centaur.

"How is't thou art so late, boy? Thou art, I doubt, but a dawdling chap," growled Mr. Meyrick, "and wilt ever be after the fair;" by which he did not mean the fair sex, who had not yet become a pursuit with Master John, but a village festival.

It was his humour thus to chide the youth on various occasions, while in his secret heart he considered him to closely resemble the angels; and never

more so than when, as now, he had his hunting leathers on, and looked—every inch of his five feet eight—a perfect sportsman.

"I stayed, father, to help Bob give *Mortimer* his oil; that dog has been out of sorts this long time."

"Ay, ay," returned the squire proudly, with a glance at Frederick, which seemed to say: "And when were *you* ever so usefully employed, I should like to know?"

Frederick was by no means daunted by that look, although he perfectly understood it; but presently Master John remarked upon the fact of young Galton's being on foot as a circumstance caused by his own carelessness. "I knew *Bolus* would go lame of that fore-foot, Fred, if something was not done for it. If he had been my nag, I bet he would have been carrying me to-day, and as sound as sixpence!"

"You see," replied Frederick tartly, who was somewhat out of breath, and perhaps out of temper, with running by the side of his mounted companions, who were by this time in full trot—"you see I have not the good fortune to be a horse-doctor."

"Well, you are a doctor's son, at all events," replied Johnny coarsely ; "and there's very little difference between working up balls for horses and pills for—— Oh, that's your game, is it !" and the lad was off his horse in a moment, picking up stones for reply to the missile which had whizzed within a hairbreadth of his head, before he could conclude his uncourteous parallel. Mr. Morrit's face, too, was scarlet, even to the very ears that had overheard young Meyrick's remarks ; and the squire perceiving this, hastened to interfere between the belligerents, whom he would else perhaps have permitted to fight it out themselves being well convinced that in any physical argument, his sturdy son would get the better.

"Drop you that stone, John," cried he in a tone such as he was wont to use in rating his dogs : "I will have no brawling here : you insulted the young fellow first, and through his father, too, who is as good, a man as any in the county. Drop that stone, I say."

"Come along, Fred," exclaimed the curate, not altogether sorry to see the boy so prompt to defend

the parental scutcheon. “Take hold of my stirrup-leather, for here is the turf at last, and we must canter on, if we would be in time. There is no boy worth a farthing who can bear malice after a run on the Downs. It seems to me that a clear wind like this clean blows all the evil out of one, and leaves us all pure within, like a newly-ventilated chamber.”

“Ay, ay,” assented the squire; “it does give one an appetite, for certain.”

And with that the little company set off at a hand-gallop, which for nearly half a mile did not need to be moderated for the sake of the agile boy on foot. Perhaps his pluck excited the admiration of *Lightfoot's* rider, or perhaps, as the curate said, the air and motion had really an exorcising effect upon the demon of ill-will, for when they pulled up, John Meyrick at once dismounted, and offered his steed to Frederick.

“Jump up,” cried he, “and let us ride and tie, as we have done scores of times before now. I am sure you must be tired.”

But the other, though appeased at once by the kindly

offer, protested that he was not tired, and that nothing would induce him to ride in his walking-clothes while John in top boots went on foot—a proceeding quite inconsistent with the eternal fitness of things. Perhaps John Meyrick was not sorry for this (for he was proud of his seat on horseback, and would scarcely have liked to have met the “field,” composed as it was sure to be of many of the gentlemen of the county, without *Light-foot* under him), but he professed to be so; and when Fred secretly slipped the thirty shillings, lost to him on the Round that morning, into his hand, he said he was ashamed to win so large a sum from him—which he was not in the least. Upon each of these “tarry-diddles,” or white lies, however, we will hope the recording angel dropped an accurate tear, as their sole intention, and indeed effect, was but to reconcile. And so, in the same circumstances as they started, the four, after no little travel, arrived on the brow of the hill that looked down on Chalcole Bottom. This was a broad level, plentifully sown with “turnups” (the *i* being changed into *u* in that euphonious district),

and at the foot of those steep green hills which skirt the Downs almost everywhere.

The meet was appointed there for the convenience of the gentlemen of the vale, but they had to ascend, of course, before the sport began, to the grass-land. The Casterton party, therefore, waited for them upon the high ground, from which the whole scene could be accurately observed, and the *dramatis personæ* recognised. Especially remarkable among them stood out two stalwart forms: one of these was Mr. Tregarthen of Tregarthen, to whose efforts the resuscitation of the ancient sport was due, a magnate of the county, with a landed property of some twelve thousand a year:

A great broad-shouldered genial Englishman ;
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep ;
A raiser of huge melons and of pine ;
A patron of some thirty charities ;
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain ;
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none ;
Fair-haired, and redder than a windy morn.

The other most remarkable figure was the curate's far-away cousin, Mr. Thomas Morrit. Although he had

more than once been brought to death's door by drink, and was even now said to be on the point of paying him another visit, still he made a goodly show, like some huge tower whose walls have been sapped and undermined.

A gentleman of broken means, much given to starts and bursts of revel, but who could sing a good song yet—which was, however, in no case a hymn—in a voice not altogether spoiled by drams, and who rode a bit of blood (the last of a goodly stud) five days a week to foxhounds, harriers, hawks, or whatever else was to be ridden to. At sight of him, the curate's brow grew dark, and his lips moved, shaping, it may be, some pious wish for his relative's reformation ; he forgave him, perhaps, but he was unable, despite several efforts, to forget him, and it was clear that the good man's mirth was marred for the day. Nevertheless, his anti-quarian heart was stirred within him at sight of the falconer with his bird upon his wrist—the magnificent Iceland hawk, far finer than those from Wales or Scotland used in the olden time—hooded and feathered

like a knight with his visor down, with his white lure (an imitation pigeon) and his string of bells. Some half-a-dozen other hawks were carried by an attendant on foot, upon a sort of hoop, so that there should be no lack of sport, if only the game were plentiful—not the stately heron, alas ! in these degenerate days, but anything they can get; and on the Downs the noble creatures must needs stoop to carrion, and check at the astonished crow.

The knot of horsemen collected about these objects of interest was considerable, and the whole cavalcade began slowly to ascend the hill; as they did so, the little bells around the legs of the captive birds jangled merrily, and they moved their plumed heads excitedly from side to side, as though they knew their freedom was at hand.

“What a queer hunting-field it is!” remarked Mr. John Meyrick. “I’m hanged if they don’t look like the mummers!”

“They revived old usages thoroughly worn out,
The souls of them fumed forth, the hearts of them torn out,”

murmured Frederick, quoting beneath his breath from one of his uncle's hated moderns.

"What a patrician look they have!" exclaimed Mr. Morrit enthusiastically. "It is certainly *par excellence* the sport of a gentleman. The very technical names belonging to it have an old-world and peculiar quaintness about them—mantling, and sniting, and pluming, and canceliering."

"And what does it all mean?" inquired Mr. Meyrick contemptuously. "What do you understand by that very fine name you mentioned last, for instance, *canceliering?*"

The curate coloured, and pretended not to hear.

"Come, what is it?" persisted the merciless squire.

Fred let go the stirrup-leather, and ran away screaming with laughter, out of reach of his uncle's riding-whip. Master John Meyrick and his father roared with merriment like bulls; it was so very seldom that the curate committed himself by talking of what he did not understand.

"The leathers by which the bells are attached to

their legs are called *bewits*," pursued the antiquary ; "the thong by which the falconer holds the hawk is termed the *leash*."

"I know that, parson!" ejaculated the squire, "and so does every man who keeps a greyhound ; but what is canceliering ?"

The curate was glad to catch sight of his friend Mr. Tregarthen, as an excuse for riding away from his tormentor. Then the whole company moved slowly over the Downs with their eyes in the air, as though they were taking observations of the sun. Presently, they came upon the feeding-ground of those consequential birds the rooks. Numbers of them were pacing the green-sward in the most solemn and decorous manner, and in the glossiest of black coats, as though each were awaiting the arrival of some distinguished deceased, on whom it was his duty to pronounce a funeral sermon. They pecked into the ground occasionally with their sombre beaks, but nothing seemed to come of it, and it appeared to be

their especial desire afterwards to look as if they had not done it.

“ It is jolly to live like a great fat crow,
For no one doth eat him wherever he goes ! ”

exclaimed Frederick incautiously.

“ That smacks of your now-a-day poetaster,” observed his uncle quietly. “ It is not good, and it is not true, as you will presently see.”

Even while he spoke, this little army of Black Brunswickers rose heavily, spread out their sable wings, and flapped slowly away, like a nightmare that is loath to leave a sleeping man. As soon as they had risen to some height, the falconer unfastened the hood of one of the splendid birds he carried, and its large eyes flashed forth like lanterns on the night. After a preliminary blink or two, it surveyed the fields of air as though it were their sole proprietor, and it was looking out for trespassers. Then, all on a sudden, its gaze lit upon the sluggish squadron—for the rook, except at chess, is a slow mover—and his jesses were

at once unfastened, and the cruel creature was away. As soon as the quarry became aware of the strange and terrible tyrant that was coming up with them, they separated in all directions, and the hawk for one instant vacillated, like an alderman in an embarrassment of dishes. Immediately afterwards, he had fixed upon his particular crow to pick, and pursued him, and him alone, thenceforward, with the pertinacity of a weasel after a hare.

He seemed to make rushes at him, and to miss him, as a too eager greyhound darts at and overruns his game; and Mr. Meyrick expressed his contempt for the performance by that comparison. At last, however, and as though a thunderbolt had indeed been shot from the bulging clouds, which were growing darker and darker momentarily, a black mass made up of pursuer and pursued dropped almost perpendicularly earthward; the hawk had stooped successfully. Ere it touched ground, however, was heard the falconer's shrill call, and the bird's precipitous descent was arrested upon the instant, and it came off, as if at

right angles, to his master, bearing the rook in his triumphant talons. In the meantime, the more excitable of the company had been at racing-speed for several minutes, and more than one had paid the penalty of his too ambitious gaze by coming, horse and man, to Mother Earth.

The deep ruts, so deserving the attention of the flying horsemen, that intersect the Downs in all directions, had sent them headlong, and loud was the laughter from the more prudent that greeted their fall. The curate had to thank his nephew for his own escape from a similar calamity, for his blind enthusiasm would have led him, once across a rabbit-warren, where the cob would have been certain to have put his foot into it, and, again, to charge the Ridgeway itself—at that particular spot at least five feet high—had not the voice at his stirrup-leather directed his rapt regards to earthly matters. There were several more flights after the black game, with more or less successful results. Sometimes the hawk would seize the rook from beneath, and then descend with it, which is called

trussing, but the stooping from above was the more common practice, and, in the pursuit of the rook, destitute of danger, though in that of the heron held to be unsafe, on account of that sagacious bird presenting his bill at the most inconvenient time—like a tailor in August—and receiving the hawk upon its point, who is thereby spitted. The day was wearing into the afternoon, and making a worse appearance, as regarded the weather, than ever, when a couple of hawks were flown at once, with the intent that they should work together upon a common quarry; but instead of this, they separated, one of them disappearing in the inky firmament, and the other, to the still greater distraction of the falconer, into a distant sheep-fold, with the apparent determination of taking a little lamb. In the middle of this, the rain came down like a torrent. Mr. Tregarthen of Tregarthen gave vent to certain quaint but very irreverent expressions, which were held to be a sort of heirloom in his ancient family.

Mr. Thomas Morrit cursed himself in excellent Saxon for being such an idiot as to get himself wet through

at such a sport as rook-hunting ; and the curate venturing no word of condolence with the proprietor of the hawks, and not perhaps without a sly laugh in his already saturated sleeve, turned his cob's head homeward. The rest of the company setting their coat-collars up like angry cats, started off at once for what each might deem his nearest shelter.

Et Tyrii comites passim, et Trojana juventus,
Dardaniusque nepos Veneris, diversa per agros
Tecta metu petiere.

There was, however, no *tecta* within three miles for any mounted man of them ; and Frederick, for the first time, congratulated himself upon being on foot, as he crept under a well-stuffed shepherd's hurdle that happened to stand beside the Ridgeway—albeit there was but small chance of any Dido joining him there. His appearance, viewed from without, was, of course, ridiculous enough, his place of refuge being neither more nor less than the trap which boyhood sets for small birds in the winter, with only a slanting hedge-stake to prevent it falling upon its occupant, but it kept him

as dry and warm as a young lad at sixteen ought ever to need to be. Fast as it poured then, however, it was nothing to what was coming, for through the slanting lines of the herald shower, he could perceive the wall of rain advancing from the west until it darkened the air around him, and brought home to him for the first time what the parish schoolmaster had striven in vain to teach him—how the motion of a plane produces a solid. It was a grand sight, but after a little, he began to draw upon his mental resources for means whereby to pass the time. He tried to picture to himself how the case would have stood if this had been the universal deluge, and he were the last man, and would, perhaps, have conceived something epical, but that the steadfast furious down-pour began to have its effect upon the covering of the hurdle, which distilled little rills of rain upon him—a slight inconvenience indeed, but it takes such a very little to interrupt poetical composition; then he fell back upon the intellectual stores of others, and commenced crooning to himself the songs and ballads that were dearest to him, a most excellent way

of whiling away solitude, as well as improving the memory, and in every respect superior to the more popular custom of whistling the mere airs of the same —discharging the musket without the ball.

Having exhausted himself with rhymes, he tried blank verse, and declaimed to the elements in the language of King Lear, who, indeed, could scarcely have been treated by them worse than he himself was, except that he had his hurdle; so that if any native had chanced to pass that desolate place in the tempest, and heard him, it would have been noted as a haunted spot for the future in the spiritual chart of the Down-country.

Scarce a thorn-tree there stands ragged and bare, and spectral with the wool it has torn from passing sheep, but a mother and her love-child at the very least have perished under it most miserably; and let the wind be soft or loud, you may always hear her dying lullaby as you pass it. Scarce a plantation lifts its trembling head, and cowers under the hill-side, but Long Jack, or Wild Tom the gamekeeper, has there

been found one winter's morning, stiff and stark, with a jagged hole in his breast, and the black blood oozing, who never fails to make *his moan o' nights* to the belated traveller. But as for the fairies, who still hold their midnight dances on the Downs, as the fresh "rings" testify, and under whose feet spring up the visible flowers, their very existence is denied, except by the merest children, and all the charming stories appertaining to them are ousted quite by these raw-head and bloody-bone legends.

Frederick had never heard a single word of the "little folk" from Mrs. Hartopp or any of his Casterton gossips; but the tale of the Phantom Huntsman of Chaldecote Bottom he *had* heard, who cheered *his skeleton hounds* not only cup in hand, but with *his head in it*. Fred was not habitually a believer in ghosts; but in that time of storm and solitude it was not without a tremor that he became for the first time conscious of other sounds about him than that made by the monotonous torrent. They seemed to shape themselves into "Hey ho, hey ho," like the sigh of a

weary man, or like the faint “Tally ho,” as Fred thought, of the huntsman in question, who, it was most probable, might by this time be excessively *blasé* with his pursuit. It could scarcely, however, be the headless horseman, for how could *he* sigh? Was it the wind in the hurdle? No; the wind never sang a song like this:

Love is a sickness full of woes,
All remedies refusing ;
A plant that with most cutting grows,
Most barren with best using.

Why so ?
If we enjoy it, then it flies ;
If not enjoyed, it sighing cries :
Hey ho.

This was the song to which the “Hey ho” belonged, and well Fred knew both it and the singer—blithe Jacob Lunes of Casterton, ordinarily dealer in snuff and tobacco in that village, and carrier three times a week between it and the nearest railway station. On he came along the Ridgeway, splashing beside his large black mare, as though all overhead was blue; albeit, his smock-frock, embroidered daintily upon the breast,

as though he was some peripatetic high-priest, clung to his legs, wet through, and his wide-awake hat was as a little hill with a moat around it.

Love is a torment of the mind,
A tempest everlasting ;
A heaven has made it of a kind
Not well, nor full, nor fasting.

Why so ?
If we enjoy it, soon it dies ;
If not enjoyed, it sighing cries :
Hey ho.

“Jacob !”

“ Master Frederick ! Why, who would have thought of seeing you here, or indeed any human creature ! How you scared me with your rantin’ ! I was a-singing only to drown my fear of bogles. There—get up in the cart, do, and keep thyself dry. Not but that the rain will do a power of good, and is excellent for the turnups.”

It was the speciality of the cheerful carrier to see good in everything. If Leckhamsley Round, which, as everybody knows, contains little beyond bones of men some fifty generations dead, and old-world coins

and spear-heads, had suddenly become an active volcano, and emitted streams of burning lava, Jacob would have expressed his opinion that it would be doubtless a good thing for the land. Fred clambered up the front of the vehicle, and from under its hospitable canopy endeavoured to hold colloquy with its proprietor without; but the thing was impossible. He saw Jacob opening his mouth at fullest stretch, but whether to yawn or to make an observation, the violence of the storm would not permit him to know. The carrier's finger, however, pointed unmistakeably to the interior of the cart, which was half-filled with monstrous packages, and lay in shadow, and presently the lad's eyes followed its direction, and fell upon the fairest sight they had ever yet beheld.

A young damsel, very simply dressed, and modest-looking, slightly blushing, and yet shyly smiling, with her long-lashed eyelids drooped demurely over dimpling cheeks, was sitting close behind him, so close that his elbow almost touched her. Her attire was humble, and she sat upon one of those corded trunks (which none

but females going out to service use), originally, perhaps, covered with hair, yet never seen by mortal except in a mangy and semi-bald condition, like the unhealthy hide of the tiger who is also a man-eater. And yet her face was delicate, and more than commonly soft in its expression :

A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse ;
Straight, but as lissom as a hazel wand ;
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair,
In gloss and hue, the chestnut, when the shell
Divides threefold to shew the fruit within.

Fred moved aside with a muttered apology for turning his back to her, and thereby placed himself within reach of the rain.

He was not wont to be indifferent to such little inconveniences, and he had a reputation for never being at a loss for words ; but now he was content to be wet, and have nothing to say for himself. If it had been light enough for her to perceive the nape of his neck, she might have easily concluded that he was blushing all over very considerably. He was too well mannered to stare, but for the life of him he could not

help throwing an occasional sidelong glance upon this entrancing and unexampled vision.

One of these uncredentialed ambassadors met a similar embassage about to set furtively forth from the maiden's eyes. The mutual embarrassment then reached its climax, and it became necessary to clothe the shameful silence with a word or two. The maiden herself was the first to set about that duty, and with a modest serenity observed: "It is very wet, sir."

The remark was in itself judicious, as not admitting of contradiction, while it courted sympathy; but the blush and tone with which it was accompanied would have recommended a much less objectionable exclamation. Indeed, I doubt whether Master Frederick heard the mere words at all.

To him they mattered not one tittle.
If those bright lips had quoted Locke,
He would have thought they murmured Little.

As soon as he knew she had spoken, the charm that had enchain'd his tongue was removed. He was solicitous to know at what spot the storm had overtaken

the cart ; and when he found that she was a stranger to the district, there was ever so much to be said upon that subject. As he spoke of the hawking, too, the girl listened with interest to his account of a sport with which it seemed she had already had through books some little acquaintance. The talk was wholly on Fred's side, but her rapt looks were worth a hundred "*Pray go ons*" and "*How delightfuls.*" The manifestly unequal relation of these young persons to one another was soon lost sight of in that of eloquent narrator and grateful recipient.

They were both amazed, and turned impatiently to Jacob, when the carrier put his head in at the opening of the tilt behind, and said : "Now, here we are, a'most at journey's end, Master Frederick."

The cart, indeed, had reached the entrance of the village. The rain was over and gone, and the sun shining, although they knew nothing about it.

"I am sorry we have to part so soon," said Frederick earnestly, imagining that this young divinity was bound for the farmhouse that stood close by.

"I am sorry, too, sir," answered the young girl, simply.

Master Frederick Galton held out his hand to say "Good-bye."

"Why, you needn't be shaking hands, you two," quoth the carrier laughing, "for you are both bound for the same house; only I thought the parson would not like it, if his nephew should be seen coming through Casterton in my cart along with the young woman. Not that there's anything wrong about it, of course; only he's so 'nation proud and particular."

"What in the name of common sense do you mean, Jacob?" inquired the young man, scarlet with indignation.

"Only that this is Polly Perling, Mrs. Hartopp's niece, sir; and this is your young master, Mr. Frederick Galton, Polly."

Frederick had, up to that moment, clean forgotten that the housekeeper was expecting her niece; and if he had remembered it, would scarcely have identified her with his charming companion; and so they

had both come home together, quite unknowingly,
in the carrier's cart.

Speluncam Dido, dux et Trojanus eandem
Devenerant.

CHAPTER VI.

AN EDITOR OUT OF TOWN.

THAT man must be an egotist indeed who has never chosen unto himself a hero ; who has never looked up to one living fellow-creature, and done him homage in his own heart, as from a vassal and inferior. In childhood, we have only love or fear for those about us ; but as soon as we are big enough to go to school, we nourish admiration.

The Cock of the School is commonly our first idol ; but he is so far removed from us—on so tremendous a pedestal—that we set up a god in the same temple, to satisfy our reverential needs ; such as Goldenmuth, the best classic ; or Juan *Major*, who kissed the master's niece ; or Gravemug, who got the divinity prize ; or Chinks, whose father allowed him half-a-crown a week

of extra pocket-money—according to the bent of our own disposition.

In adolescence, we no longer require the real presence of these objects of veneration. Our then Pantheon, which has been entirely restocked, and in which all the old statues have fallen to pieces of themselves, is composed for the most part of the heads, or of those we believe to be the heads, of the calling to which we ourselves aspire : the Rev. Bohun Erges, Slimey Suttle, Q.C., or Admiral Buster. In manhood, and brought face to face with these chieftains, we perceive their metal to be so plentifully streaked with alloy, that the whole collection is afterwards carted away, and shot as rubbish ; or we use the materials to form a few steps and a pediment, which we ascend ourselves, and remain there for the rest of our lives, in a classical attitude.

During the five or six months that succeeded the hawking at Chaldecote Bottom, the man who filled the largest space in the thoughts and aspirations of Frederick Galton was Mr. Jonathan Johnson, barrister of

the Middle Temple, and conductor of that tremendous periodical, the *Paternoster Porcupine*.

The young fellow looked forward to Christmas as to a blessed season that should bring a living editor before his eyes for the first time. He pictured to himself an intellectual-looking being, all forehead and hair, whose conversation would be epigrammatic. The reality was disappointing. Mr. Jonathan Johnson had but little forehead, though his head was as bare as a bell-handle. His conversation may have been epigrammatic in intention, but that was all that could be said for it; it certainly was not antithetical, for he did but very rarely finish a sentence. The poor man had such a habit of stammering, that he could scarcely enunciate a single remark to the end, but repeated the first half of it a great many times over, by way of compensation. He arrived early one Sunday morning quite unexpectedly in a gig from the railway station, a vehicle having been despatched for him by the curate, according to mutual arrangement upon the preceding day, in vain.

He had nun—nun—not been able to leave tut—

tut—town ; he had not been able to leave tut—tut—town in time to tut—tut—take ; he had not been able to leave town in time to take advantage of that arrangement. He could now only stay till Monday. He got on with his conversation exactly like a carpenter with his plane, perpetually going back again over the same plank until it was all smooth and free from nodosities. He said that was the only way to kuk—kuk—cure a fuff—fuff—fell, the only way to cure a fellow of stammering. But the method was certainly tedious, and had not cured Mr. Jonathan Johnson. If you suggested a word to him when he was in difficulties, he would—unlike any other person who suffers from the like misfortune—reject it scornfully, although it was the very thing he wanted. He would hold you, with the tenacity of the Ancient Mariner, in direst expectancy, while his colloquial plane was working, and you must listen (unless you knocked him down) until he had finished to his liking, or was brought up short by some insurmountable difficulty—a *b* or a *d*—in which case he would suddenly exclaim : “ It’s of no kuk—kuk—con-

sequence," and wink with cheerfulness, as though he had made a most satisfactory peroration.

He had been so long in stating whether he would come to ch—ch—church or not, that the curate had walked off without him, leaving Frederick to conduct him thither, if it should please the great man to descend so far, which it presently did. It was the winter-custom of Frederick and his father to sit in the rectory pew in preference to their own, because it had a fireplace in it, as the squire's pew also had, in that old-fashioned feudal church at Casterton. The curate was unable to make any alteration without leave of the absent rector, and was obliged to preach, like a prison chaplain, to a congregation who could not see one another, to a flock each family of which was folded in a separate pew. There were galleries indeed, and some few free seats in the aisle, with no backs to them, for the very poor ; but the majority of the audience were enabled to enjoy themselves to the full after the fashion of that ingenuous farmer who confessed to his bishop that, for his part, he always passed sermon-time very com-

fortably—"I lays up my legs, my lord, and shuts my eyes, and just thinks of nothing like." The interior of the edifice was clean, because it was white-washed throughout; but it could scarcely be termed imposing. The Ten Commandments, which depended from a great beam which crossed the centre, were obscured by twice that number of fire-buckets, for which the churchwardens could find no fitter place. The upper gallery was so close to the roof that it was, for seclusion and independence, almost as good as a pew. Unless one snored very loudly, the preacher could never tell one was asleep there, and so entertain a grudge that might influence the distribution of the compliments of the season, in the shape of coals and blankets—for even divines are men, and it is doubtful whether many of them would now-a-days be found to heal a Eutychus, even if they had the gift. To Mr. Jonathan Johnson, however, whose mind was not deeply imbued with the proprieties of ecclesiastical architecture, the arrangements of Casterton church were satisfactory in a very high degree. The sight of the fire in his pew delighted

him hugely ; he flattered it, cautiously and tenderly, with the poker throughout the service, and even surreptitiously heaped coals upon it during the Litany, to the great scandal of the curate, who could not but behold the transaction, by reason of his elevated position.

“This pew of yours is a pa—pa—pattern, sir,” observed he, behind his hymn-book, to Frederick. “It is the greatest mistake to connect discomfort with devotion, as the High Church people do. I hate those low-backed seats, where everybody looks at the pup—pup—parting of one’s hair behind.”

Frederick thought within himself that it must have been some time since such a liberty could possibly have been taken with the back of Mr. Johnson’s head ; but he only bowed gravely, blushing, too, not a little, because he felt that his uncle’s eyes were fixed upon him and his companion like a couple of burning-glasses.

After morning church, Mr. Johnson paid so much devotion to cold beef and pickles, and, in particular, to some venerable cherry-brandy—which he endeavoured

to explain was taken only as a stut—stut—stut, but finally observed that it was of no consequence—that he pronounced himself unfit to attend afternoon service. Fred therefore accompanied the profane one in a walk up Leckhamsley Round. Winter had drawn his winding-sheet over the whole landscape, and Nature lay stark and gaunt beneath the glittering robe. The far-off river in the vale, which, save in the snow-time, glistened so brightly in the sunbeams, now alone looked blue and dull. The chalk-roads were one with the white Down. A few stunted thorns in the near foreground were transformed by the lavish genius of the season into trees of frosted silver. The pigeon-house that towered above the rick-yard of Farmer Groves, as fitly as banner over citadel, was silver too, and of a pattern more exquisite and chaste than ever was designed by artist-jeweller. The outlying cottages—disgraceful to the land in their scant accommodation (although no worse at Casterton than elsewhere in the Down country)—ill-floored, ill-roofed, ill-kept—shone forth like fairy bowers ; the very pigsties dazzled the eyes that looked upon them ; for

Snow, like Purity herself, makes everything she touches however homely beautiful.

“How very glorious!” exclaimed Frederick, rapt in admiration of the scene, and forgetting in it for a moment even the presence of the conductor of the *Paternoster Porcupine*.

Mr. Jonathan Johnson observed, with considerable difficulty, that it was very cold.

“But what a scene!” exclaimed the young man apologetically.

“It looks like Death, sir,” returned the other with a shudder, “and as though there were no more twenty port, nor anybody to drink it. Let us go home; and, by-the-bye, why did that uncle of yours ask me down to Casterton, my young friend? He don’t care tuppence for me, and he don’t revere the *Porcupine*.”

“I am thinking, sir, of adding a humble unit to the literary profession in my own person, and he hoped that you might be induced to exert your powerful influence in my favour.”

“Bless my soul, what a plain-spoken young gentleman

you are ! It's quite refreshing," stammered the gentleman from town. " So I am asked down here to be your usher into the world of letters am I ? Well, with all my heart, my lad, I'm sure, for I think I like you. We will talk the matter over after dinner to-night. But call me horse if I don't make Morrit pay for it. It shall cost him a second bottle to-night, I promise him, though it should give me gout in the stut—stut—stut——It's of no consequence."

CHAPTER VII.

ACROSS THE WALNUTS AND THE WINE.

THE curate dined at five o'clock, as his custom was upon the Sunday ; but it was near eleven before his guest and nephew could be induced to leave the table. He delivered the conversation almost entirely into their hands, partly because he judged it better that the youth should make his own way with the man of letters, and partly because there were few subjects on which the editor and himself could converse without risk of a quarrel. With respect to religious matters, indeed, Mr. Jonathan Johnson was quite prepared to endorse the curate's views, just as he would have deferred to a soldier's opinion regarding military affairs, or a builder's concerning bricks and mortar ; but as to politics, the gentleman from London opined that the

ideas of a parson vegetating at Casterton were quite unworthy of the least consideration. Like all college Fellows who have become metropolitanized, he despised such as remained at the university, or shut themselves out of the world, just as the emigrated Scotchman contemns the Caledonian pure and simple. He himself professed the shifting faith of a Liberal Conservative, and held a Tory to be a sort of political mastodon.

"There's only one Tory left in London, sir, and that is my sub-editor, Percival Potts," said Mr. Johnson, after a controversy warmer than usual; "you shall be introduced to him the very next time you come to town."

The Rev. Robert Morrit muttered something in reply respecting editors both in-chief and subordinate, which, let us hope, was only a quotation from the commination service; and nothing more was said upon the matter. There followed, indeed, rather an awkward pause, until Mr. Johnson broke it by requesting to know how a young fellow like Frederick, who had no sermons to

plagiarise, and no sick people to frighten, managed to pass the wintry time at Casterton.

"I go out bat-folding," returned the young man, laughing.

"Explain yourself. Bat-folding!" echoed the man of letters, with genuine wonder. "Come, I am going to learn something."

It is equally impossible to set forth in words the self-complacent expression of Mr. Johnson as he uttered that remark, or the contempt that overspread his entertainer's features as he listened to it. The editor and the curate each imagined one another to be the most ignorant (consistently with presumption) of the human species; they had each also an unduly elevated opinion of their own intelligence.

"We go out," pursued Frederick, "on nights when there is no moon, with a folding-net about six feet high, and with long handles, which require a powerful man to work them properly. Another carries a lantern; the rest have very long sticks to beat the covers with. Our game, which is mainly sparrows, is found in ivied walls,

under house-tiles, and beneath the eaves of ricks. The netter spreads his snare over such places as these, and the lantern is held behind it; then we thrash the ivy or poke the eaves with our sticks, and out fly the half-awakened victims, making straight for the light, and on their way get entangled in the meshes. When a sufficient number are thus obtained, the net is folded and thrown on the ground, and the game is secured. Sometimes we make prey of a larger bird than we intended. We were "folding" in the ivy underneath Farmer Groves's windows last night; he put his head out suddenly to know what was the matter, and we, who thought it was an owl, clapped the net together rather sharply. I have his night-cap now."

Fred produced the article in question—a white bag, large enough for a beehive, and with an elegant appendage of red cotton. "In native ivy, tassel hung," said he, "we found it."

"The lad is always quoting, or misquoting, from your modern poets, Johnson. The poor boy thinks he is a genius like yourself, and wants you to give him a lift

upon the long road of literature. I shall esteem it a personal kindness if you can do so."

The curate exceedingly disliked this asking of favours. It was a foolish boast of his, that he had never been indebted for anything to any man—that no one had ever put so much as a finger to help him with his earthly burden. It especially galled him to have to appeal to such a man as Johnson, that his nephew might be apprenticed to such a trade as Literature.

"Your nephew is very young," observed the editor doubtfully, inflating his lungs, as the manner of some prosperous persons is when they are about to be patronizing "he must fuff—fuff—first fill his pub—pub—pub"—

"His pocket," suggested the curate, with impatience. "Nay, that's the very thing he wants literature to do for him, man."

"He must first fill his pub—pub—basket, sir!" exclaimed the editor, with a tremendous effort. "He must know something to begin with. He cannot set to work at once, spinning out of his own stut—stut—stut—(it's of no consequence), like a blessed spider."

“He is going to the university very soon,” interposed the curate, who perceived that propitiation was become absolutely necessary. “Alma Mater may not teach a great deal, but she will give him, at all events, the rudiments of education. You must allow that much, my dear fellow; even *you* are indebted to her for the rudiments. Your classical acquirements are more evident in your works than you may yourself imagine.”

Mr. Jonathan Johnson was a man of considerable acuteness, but he had the weakness of his order—praise, nay, flattery, was sweeter to him than honey and the honey-comb. He actually persuaded himself—for the time, at least—like one who delivers himself up to hashish—that the Rev. Robert Morrit *had* studied his works, and was delivering his deliberate opinion on them.

“Perhaps so,” replied he, much mollified—“perhaps you are right, Morrit. I don’t know any man’s judgment, when disinterested and unbiassed, that I respect more than I do yours. I should like much to know, now, which of my books has most met with your approbation.

"Wife and Widow" is my own favourite, but many of my friends seem to prefer my "Love in a Lighthouse." The leading journal spoke very favourably the other day of the latter volume."

It was lucky that Mr. Johnson happened to mention these efforts of genius by their titles, or the curate would have been nonplussed indeed, for he had never heard so much as the names of them before. As it was, however, he responded with much gravity, and carefully averting his eye from his nephew (who was well aware of the enormity of the tarry-diddle which the reverend gentleman was telling), that he thought that "Love in a Lighthouse" was—not to draw invidious comparisons between masterpieces—the more admirable of the two; he believed also, that that was his nephew's opinion, who was acquainted with all that had been written within the last ten years, and who, for so young a man, had a good deal of taste.

This was an ingenious device of the curate's; first, for reverting to the subject next to Frederick's heart, namely, the launch of his little skiff on the waters of

Literature, which seemed in danger of being swamped by the revolution of Mr. Johnson's own tremendous paddles ; and secondly, to shift from his own shoulders the burden of a conversation which was by no means without its difficulties.

" My opinion is, of course, worth nothing," observed the ready youth ; " but that scene in the lighthouse, in which drunken Hans prevents the lantern from revolving, and thereby wrecks the *Arethusa* steam-ship, with his own sweetheart on board, is one of the grandest incidents of dramatic retribution with which I am acquainted. In my own humble efforts of the same kind, I have often endeavoured to keep that picture before me, and I dare say am indebted to it for much which I persuade myself is my own."

" Indeed !" exclaimed the conductor of the *Porcupine*, rubbing his hands ; " this is indeed gratifying. To earn the applause of the generation rising around him, is one of the writer's highest aims. And so you liked the 'Lighthouse,' did you, my young friend ? "

" Let us see some of these humble efforts of yours,

Fred," interrupted his uncle, who began to fear that the conversation would never escape from that literary Eddystone; "let us hear a chapter out of the Carthaginian novel of real life."

"Ah, yes, let us hear that," observed Mr. Johnson with a slight yawn, and a very manifest diminution of interest.

"Or the translation from Horace," added the curate, "which will possess the recommendation of greater brevity."

"No, I won't listen to any translation," observed the editor decisively. "It would bore me excessively to hear Horace read aloud in the original—how much more, then, to listen to him when rendered into English!"

The curate muttered something, not so much in defence of Horace, as in deprecation of somebody's acquaintance with the Latin tongue. "You were always a staunch mathematician, Johnson," was, however, all that could be distinctly heard.

"I have got a Fragment here," observed Frederick,

diffidently ; "a few lines which express a frequent fancy of mine—morbid enough, perhaps, and untrue, but"—

"Never cry stinking fish, young man," interrupted the editor ; "you will find plenty of people to hold their noses at what you have to offer, without any warning from you."

There is no position in which civilised man can possibly feel less complacent than when he undertakes to read his own effusions aloud before a literary censor. In giving readings in public, he is comparatively at ease, since by their very presence the audience tacitly confess their inferiority, and he knows that he would not return the compliment by listening to one of them on any account whatever. But when a critical individual has the right of saying : "I don't quite follow you there ;" or, "I doubt whether that scene be not somewhat coarse ;" or (Heavens and Earth !) "Excuse me, but do you not think that that last chapter was just a little tedious ?" I say that, under such circumstances, there is no man more to be pitied than the sucking author. Only imagine if the critical person should be

drowsy, and the unhappy reader be compelled to resort to unworthy devices to recall him to a sense of his situation—such as dropping the manuscript with a great deal of noise and fluttering ; inquiring with anxiety as to whether the wretch found himself quite comfortable ; or even remarking with meaning : “ Be so good, Mr. Critic, as to give me your *best* attention during the ensuing episode.” Can any position be more humiliating ? Can self-respect be destroyed by any more appalling method? I answer : No ; not at least within the limits of probability. Although, perhaps, a parallel situation may be found in some wild effort of the imagination, such as the being appointed auctioneer while our infants are being disposed of by public roup, when the depreciatory remarks of very small bidders might perhaps produce an equal pain. A tragedian in want of an engagement, giving a private specimen of his talents before a manager—apostrophising the elements, as Lear, before an audience of one, and that one perhaps a Jew-bankrupt—must find it trying work. But then he is not uttering his own sentiments, the self-

chosen language of his own heart, each carefully-coined and well-weighed word of which is dear to him.

One's proposal of marriage to some beautiful and accomplished young female, is perhaps as embarrassing; but then it is soon over. You have not to plead for a couple of hours or so, while your love makes no sign, either one way or the other, but engages herself indifferently, with a toothpick, as your critic will do. In particular, it is impossible to read one's poetry to any advantage under such circumstances. "The chariot-wheels jar in the gate through which we drive them forth."

Mr. Frederick Galton, a young gentleman in general of much self-confidence, stammered almost as pertinaciously as Mr. Jonathan Johnson in the endeavour to enunciate his Fragment,

When the doors have closed behind us, and the voices died away,
Do the singers cease their singing—do the children end their play ?
Do the words of wisdom well no more through the calm lips of age ?
Are the fountains dry whence the young draw hopes too bright for the
faith of the sage ?
And, like to the flower that closeth up when the East begins to glow,
Doth the maiden's beauty fade from off her tender cheek and brow ?

Are they all but subtle spirits, changing into those and these,
To vex us with a feigned sorrow, or to mock us while they please ?
All the world a scene phantasmal, shifting aye to something strange,
Such as, if but disenchanted, one might mark in act to change ;
See the disembodied beings, whom we held of our own kind,
Friend, and foe, and kin, and lover, each a help to make us blind ;
Set to watch our lonely hours, ambushing about our path.
That our eyes shall ne'er be opened, till their lids be closed in death ;
And when so closed, will all things be as though we had ne'er been
born,
And e'en without those tears that are dried swift as the dews by the
morn ?
That make us feel this fancy more, so strange doth it appear
How the memory of a dead man dies with those he held most dear ;
As though there was an end, with life, of the mockery that beguiles
Our every act, tricks out our woes, and cheats us of our smiles,
And makes (but feigns) to love and scorn, and parts and reconciles.

There was a painful pause, when this unsatisfactory performance was concluded.

“ Well, Fred,” observed his uncle at length, “ I am very sorry, but I must confess that I do not in the least understand what your muse has been driving at. What do you say, Johnson ? ”

“ I think I see what the young man means,” remarked the censor ; “ but it is at best, as he has himself observed, a morbid fancy, born of the egotism that is inherent in the literary character.”

"How did you manage to eradicate that weakness in your own case?" inquired the curate gravely.

"It was a kuk—kuk—case of der—der—der—it was a case of discipline of the mind, sir. I was determined to overcome it, and I did.—Now, don't be discouraged, young gentleman; I myself have written several very indifferent poems. I thought myself at one time a great poetical genius. Perhaps I could really do as well as some to whom the laurel has been universally awarded. I wrote a series of ballads once in the *Westminster Volunteer*, an amateur magazine of some merit, years ago. They are very good ballads, sir, but they were not appreciated."

"They were upon English history, were they not?" inquired Frederick, languidly. He could no longer feign to be interested in this man's confounded writings. He felt as if his intellect had received its death-blow. Mrs. Hartopp's commendation of his literary efforts had indeed always elevated him, but not without self-consciousness that that beer was small to get intoxicated upon; and the late reception of his Fragment convinced

him of the worthlessness both of her approbation and of that which she approved.

"They *were* upon English history, sir," returned the editor graciously. "I am glad you remember them. Did you yourself ever select a subject from the same source? It is better for a young man to do so; it affords a trellis-work upon which to train his luxuriant thoughts, which have rarely strength to stand of themselves. Your fancy, in particular, which is too subjective, sir, although full of promise, had better be confined for the present to some such field."

The colour came back to the young man's cheek as he heard these words, and the embers of hope were fanned within him. "I have a short ballad here," murmured he, "upon 'The Death of Cromwell.'"

"I hope that it's written to the tune of the *Rogue's March*," observed the curate.

"I trust," said the editor, "it contains no disrespect towards the greatest pur—pur—pur"—

"The greatest puritanical scoundrel that ever spoke through his nose," suggested the curate.

"The greatest pur—pur—prince that ever ruled in England," quoted Mr. Johnson.

"You shall judge for yourselves," quoth Frederick gaily, "and I hope it may please both your worships."

THE DEATH OF CROMWELL.

The wind was up and wild that night
On flood, and field, and fell ;
Untouched by man, from each church-tower
There pealed a passing bell ;
At midnight, all the land rang out
The great Protector's knell.
The walls a solemn anthem rolled ;
The forests bent and brake ;
The moon was hid ; the stars were quenched ;
The wasted earth did quake :
'Twas meet God's every work should show
When God that soul did take.
And all men stood, like sentinels
Who hear about their posts
The ring of spear, the beat of hoof,
The clang of charging hosts ;
But wist not if 'tis friend or foe,
Nor who hath won or lost.
And far beyond the tossing seas,
That tempest tore the vine,
And whirled their snows from Alps to Alps,
And levelled low the pine ;
For all that dwelt in Christendom,
'Twas meet, should see the sign.

But round his rocking palace-gates,
The great Protector's guard,
The men that had no chief but one,
Still kept their watch and ward,
And prayed so loud and earnestly,
The tempest scarce was heard ;
For well they knew him near to death,
Their tried and trusty friend,
Their leader in a hundred fields,
And matchless to the end,
God had not, to their iron arms
Another such to send,
Whose name was dreadful on the Earth,
And dreadful on the Main,
'Neath whose broad shield God's people couched,
Nor put their trust in vain
In him who taught Rome charity,
And bent the knee of Spain.
As, through that night, from hour to hour,
The preachers, grave and sad,
Came forth from where great Cromwell lay,
With what dark news they had,
Did each stern veteran weep to hear,
As weeps some orphan lad.
" This night is our great general's last,
A death-time fit and rare
For him who gave to God the praise,
And whom God gave the war.
This is the night of Worcester field,
Brave comrades, and Dunbar ;
And lo ! his thoughts are with you now,
The chosen of the Lord.
His brows are knit, his hands are clenched,
He dreams he grasps the sword.

' Let us go down to Gilgal, men,'
Was his last spoken word.
This morn he saw the sun break forth
As on that Dunbar day,
And strove to prop him on his arm,
To meet the broad bright ray ;
' And let the Lord arise,' had said,
But had not strength to say ;
But we spoke for him to the end ;
All noontide wrestled we,
But since the tempest first was stirred,
His heart is back with *ye*
And now he cries : ' They charge, they charge ! '
And now : ' They flee, they flee ! ' "
.Hark ! hushed is every breath of air !
Marked ye this sudden lull ?
How star by star comes forth in peace
To meet the moon at full ?
Great Cromwell's soul is other-where,
And other realms doth rule.

"That's de—de—devilish good, young man!" observed the editor, dogmatically.

"A great deal too good for the subject," objected the curate. "Where the lad picks up such abominable sentiments, I am sure I cannot think."

"Pooh ! the boy's all right," quoth Mr. Jonathan Johnson: "it is easy to see that he's in the Carlyle stage just now."

"And where will that carry him to?" inquired Mr. Morrit, grimly.

"No very great distance, as I believe myself; but Percival Potts affirms, to Toryism. All distinguished persons, Potts makes out to be Tories at heart, and whatever they say that is good, he contends to have, at bottom, a Tory signification. You would get on with Percival Potts, sir, famously."

"Umph!" grunted the curate, as though he would say he trusted to end his days with philosophy, even if he should never make the acquaintance of that gifted gentleman.

"Percival Potts," continued the editor soliloquising, "is one of those men who do not really care three skips of a lul-lul lamb for any principles; but finding Toryism less represented in literature than other *isms*, he adopted it, and has worked it with some success. The possession of it gives him a sort of excuse for the display of his insolence—and he is a very insolent beggar to his equals, is Percival—because it entitles him to say: "I am naturally humble; I revere my superiors; I am the last

description of individual to give myself airs." If there is so much as a baronet in the room, however, Potts is always on his best behaviour ; and, when intoxicated, he is amusing, since in that state he never fails to favour the company with his own genealogy, the links of which he supplies as he goes on from his perfervid imagination. You must certainly meet Potts, my dear fellow."

" He must be charming indeed," observed Mr. Morrit with gravity. " I count the hours until I see him.—In the meantime, Fred, have you got any more manuscripts ? "

" Has he got any more ? " repeated the editor. " Why, bless my soul, Morrit, he has thousands. These things are to the literary aspirant as shoots are to the sapling. They are mental minutiæ—bloodlettings of nature's own, without which the patient would die of congestion of the brain. They are the favourable intellectual eruptions, which carry off goodness knows what diseases, but madness, certainly, for one. Now, have you not a chestful at home, young gentleman—a large three-storied

chestful, such as linen is generally kept in? Come now, confess."

"I have a pretty large deskful of them," replied the young man, modestly.

"Good. I will come over to-morrow morning, and overhaul them; and if there is anything worth having, you shall see it in the *Porcupine*.—And now, Morrit, let us have a second bottle to wash away this taste of literature. The honey of Hybla cloys one's palate confoundedly, but of the bees-wing of good port wine we never tire."

The curate left the room, to return with a saw-dusty bottle held slantingly in both his hands, like an infant, and with a tenderness at least equal to most child-carriers.

"Now, Johnson, take the screw, man," said he; "and be very careful not to jerk the cork out."

Mr. Jonathan Johnson acted as directed, while the Rev. Robert Morrit held the patient firmly between his knees, so that the liquor was arrived at, with the least possible shock to the system.

The London editor lay back in his easy-chair, smacking his lips at intervals as the port went down, like minute-guns at sea.

There was of course no more conversation, except upon the "vintages," respecting which the two full-grown gentlemen were duly wearisome, and asserted the usual falsehoods. I forbear to repeat them, since the ignorance and contemptible ambition of mankind are never perhaps so painfully apparent as when they dilate upon this unhappy subject.

"I have not tasted such wo—wo—wine as that, Morrit, since I last dined at Minim Hall, near fourteen years ago," said the editor solemnly, as he lit his bed-candle, after consuming three spills in the attempt.

"I dare say not; I can easily believe it," quoth the parson, with a movement of his venerable head.

And yet that second bottle was by no means "twenty" port, as the curate very well knew, but of a vintage much more modern, of which a considerable quantity could be still obtained of the provincial wine-merchant, without favour, and at a moderate price.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SHADOW IN THE HOUSE.

WITHOUT immediate reference to that unhappy skeleton in the cupboard who has been so very hardly worked by modern novelists, we may safely say, that there is commonly something "going on" under most roofs which it is the interest of the party or parties concerned to keep exceedingly quiet. The more respectable—that is to say, the more extensive the household—the more numerous of course are these domestic secrets. In the boudoir or the housekeeper's room, in the heir's chamber or the tutor's garret, in the master's study or the groom's apartment over the stables—a shadow almost certainly abides in one or more of these, crouching down and cowering away from every onlooker. Only one, or two persons at most, are aware perhaps of

its existence, but there it is. In rare cases, it is never discovered, nor will be till the great day for the discovery of all secrets ; and now and again, the black and unsightly thing breaks forth before the eyes of all men, and casts its gloom over the entire dwelling, with all that are in it. But, most commonly, the event lies between those two extremes : the lantern of some domestic detective is turned in an unguarded moment upon the objectionable intruder, and there ensues what is facetiously termed "a row in the pantry" (not, of course, that the butler need be concerned in it), a mitigated "coming-to-grief," as it used to be termed at Dr. Softsoap's academy for young gentlemen, when one of us was privately withdrawn instead of expelled. I protest that I think Paterfamilias may consider himself fortunate if the matter takes these moderate dimensions, and only happens about half-a-dozen times during his head-mastership. The volcano which lies beneath his and every man's mansion may perhaps be content to expend itself through these insignificant outlets ; but if everything has always gone smoothly and respectably

with him and his, let him tremble in his too easy-chair, for the time of eruption must needs be drawing nigh, and the pyrotechnic display will be upon a scale proportionate with its infrequency. There need not be of necessity a murder in that house ; but it is only too probable. As to the startling details of his (Paterfamilias's) irascible temperament, and the administration of his horsewhip to the female servants ; as to Materfamilias's attachment to Eau-de-Cologne as a refreshing *drink* ; as to his eldest son's flirtation with the governess, and other little household *ana* of that sort—these will, of course, make their *incidental* appearance in the course of the principal catastrophe ; they will form the accessories of that thrilling scene which will one day present itself to the public, when the curtain is suddenly pulled up, by the hand of the law, without the prompter's bell. But the scene itself ! Heavens ! there will perhaps be a pamphlet published about it, with wood-cuts adapted from existing works of fiction ; Paterfamilias himself being misrepresented under the guise of “Bertram the Bloodsucker,” as he once

appeared in a cheap novel that was never popular. Of course, after the explosion has taken place, all the neighbours assert that it was nothing more than might have been expected ; they themselves had long heard rumblings, earthshakings, portents of various kinds, which, however, from feelings of "perhaps mistaken delicacy" (and the fear of actions for libel), they had not communicated to others. But in sober truth, before that great finale, with the blue and red fire at the wings, exhibited itself, no such spectacle was at all anticipated, and least of all by many of the *dramatis personæ* of the piece themselves ; all was genteel comedy with them, without the least tincture of melodrama.

Where, for instance, to all appearance, were the elements of such a catastrophe in the limited household of Dr. William Galton, general practitioner at Casterton ? consisting as it did of him and his son only ; Mrs. Hartopp ; Mary, "niece to the above," as the old playbills say ; Sally, a maid-of-all-work ; John, a groom. From what we already know of the good doctor, we may conclude that no suspicion of drink, far less of

philandering, need attach to *him*. The housekeeper, too, was placed by time above temptation from the affections; and as to liquids, she never touched anything stronger than the home-vintages, such as cowslip and ginger wine; not from virtue, but because "wines and sperits," as she expressed it, "allays flew to her head." The groom, a sober person, who liked drab for its own sake, was engaged to marry Sally, a circumstance which, to those who were acquainted with that young lady's personal appearance (she was mottled throughout, that is to say, as far as the public eye could range, like brawn), appeared strange indeed, but still not sufficiently so to be romantic. Mary Perling, the quiet lass who took so handily to mince-meat, was good-looking enough, it is true, to have caused ten Trojan wars, but who was there left to woo, far less to quarrel about her? "To conclude—but it's scarcely worth while to put that in—there was one little boy; but he only learned Latin." A youth of such tender years that he had not yet gone to the university, but was engaged with mere preliminary studies, could scarcely

be considered a dangerous element in any household. That, at least, was Dr. Galton's opinion, the lad's own father, who surely ought to have known, if anybody did. "My son," he would have said, and not without a certain dignity, had we ventured to question the fact, "is a mere boy, who has not (I am thankful to say) been contaminated by evil example. He is a good lad, too, and incapable of committing a baseness. Indeed, his disposition is so open and candid, that it could scarcely harbour a secret under any circumstances."

This is the blessed creed of many fathers. Mothers are even more trusting, except in certain cases, when their darling innocent may be within reach of any ravening wolf in petticoats, bent upon the destruction of his youthful happiness. If Mrs. Galton had been living, it is doubtful whether Mary Perling would have been suffered to make mince-meat in that house so long. She would have been provided with a most excellent situation somewhere else, not within walking-distance of Casterton, in less than a week after her mistress had

heard that her son and the young woman had come home in the carrier's cart together.

Master Frederick had not followed Jacob Lunes and his fair charge to his father's house at once upon that occasion. He had given them time—thereby, doubtless, doing some violence to the exceeding openness of his disposition—in order that their arrival and his own might not be simultaneous. Had not the carrier said that Uncle Morrit would be annoyed to think that his nephew and Mary had been fellow-travellers (although, as Jacob had very truly observed, there was no sort of harm in it); and might not his father have a similar objection?

Frederick had therefore waited, dawdling on the outskirts of the village, and at length entered the home-gate with his hands in his pockets, and whistling, as though nothing remarkable had occurred. Want of thought is not invariably the reason why folks whistle; they sometimes do it to conceal their thoughts. One man will whistle upon finding himself in a lonesome lane at night, and seeing a couple of suspicious fellows

with bludgeons lounging at the far end of it, in order to suggest the idea of a carelessness which he by no means feels ; while another, who flits behind him, will whistle in order to let these gentlemen know that there is game coming their way likely to repay any trouble they may be put to in securing it. It is also without doubt the habit of many polished persons to whistle melodies in order to hide their annoyances, when they would much rather (if it were but consonant with etiquette) expend their breath in maledictions, or even physical violence.

When, therefore, Mrs. Hartopp met her young master at the front door, and said with a grin : " So you came home with my niece Polly, did you ? " she might have knocked that young gentleman down with a feather. He was an exceedingly clever fellow, there is no doubt ; but he was but a male creature, after all. His stupid idea of concealing that he had already met with the housekeeper's niece, was in every way worthy of his sex. On the other hand, Mary's first words to her aunt, after their mutual salutations were over, had acquainted her with all the circumstances of the case. She was

not a very clever girl, and no more *intrigante* by nature than the rest of womankind ; but she at once foresaw the imprudence (though, perhaps, not the impropriety) of sharing any such secret with her young master, which Jacob Lunes would have it in his power to reveal at any time. The misogynists—allied with whom, alas, is Materfamilias—will call this cunning. It was nothing of the sort ; it was merely the working of that instinct of self-defence with which Providence has endowed every unprotected female ; but for it, there would be far worse havoc among them even than there is. I do not doubt that the hawk affirms the doves to be a most deceitful race. I have known many men in many cities, yea, and even simple gentlemen in country-places, but I have never known one (though the victims are popularly believed to be as plentiful as blackberries) who has been “ensnared by a female.” Ensnared ! As well might you say that the sparrows ensnared Master Fred when he went a bat-folding. What cowardly falsehoods men repeat to one another concerning this matter ; those, too, whose very professions would seem

to demand of them truth and chivalry. To hear them talk, one would imagine that a young gentleman who would be virtuous, or not married against his will, must needs go about the world with the word *Engaged* placarded on him, as though he were a railway carriage, and that even that might be an insufficient security.

It is quite probable—nay, certain—that every female who has attained the age of seventeen or so is more or less upon the look-out for a husband. A man has his own calling, and a score of things to concern himself with, among which marriage is but one, although, indeed, it occupies a prominent place. A woman has only marriage to look to; and she does not lose sight of it sometimes so early as might be desirable. Moreover, she is often desirous to marry well; unduly anxious (“Designing, artful hussy!” clucks Materfamilias covering her male chicks, if they have any expectations, with her indignant wings) to ally herself with a class above her own. This is a great weakness. But have men no weaknesses of the same sort? Do they stoop to no fawnings, no trucklings, no time-servings, in

order that they may mix with people a round or two higher on the social ladder than themselves ? Truly, as the people of Siam approach their aristocracy upon their stomachs, so do many of *us* go, all the days of our lives, when in presence of our superiors, as though the curse pronounced upon the serpent of old was shared by the toad-eaters. But except the trifling losses of independence and self-respect, no hurt happens to the male whatever. No Lady Clara Vere de Vere of real life ever yet made a tenant-farmer cut his throat for love of her ; our agriculturists (male) are not such fools as that, whatever the Radicals may say. But with the woman, it is different ; in this weakness of hers lies a great danger. She stakes high—higher than she can afford, more than is becoming—for a great prize, and sometimes she loses all.

Mary Perling's father had been a wheelwright in a country village, and would have left his widow and family pretty well to do in respect of fortune, if he could have kept out of the public-house. He had not been a drunkard, but had enjoyed his glass and social

companionship overmuch for his station in life. Had he been a gentleman, and spent the same time at whist, or in a club smoking-room, there would have been nothing to complain of; but as it was, he had been considered, and justly, to be a dissipated man. The proportion of income which a poor man spends in pleasure of that sort (if he spend anything) is very great, as compared with the expenditure of the rich. All pleasures are dear, save such as gathering primroses, and it is not every uneducated person who has a pastoral taste. So, finding herself left with straitened means, and having another daughter at home to assist in the house-management, Widow Perling sent her Mary out to service, although she was not absolutely compelled, by reason of poverty, to do so. She was not a beggar, at all events, that might not be a chooser as to the nature of the girl's employment. A somewhat superior place, as assistant to an ancient housekeeper, had been procured for her in Grosvenor Square, London, in the family of one of the county members; and in the meantime she had been sent to her aunt Hartopp to learn to make

certain dainties and preserves, as well as to lay in a stock of the bracing air of the Downs against the time she should be "in city pent." Mary had not been brought up to work at anything more serious than samplers ; it had seemed a pity to her father, to her mother, to everybody, in short, that saw her, that such a lily of the field as she should be made to toil at all ; and indeed, so long as Abraham Perling was alive—a stalwart skilful man, who was never out of work, nor sick (save that dread once, when it was unto death)—there was no necessity for it.

Mary, therefore, was almost as ignorant of useful arts as any lady, and had a lady's hands ; she could play a few simple airs upon the piano rather nicely : she had acquired a smattering of French, which, however, she was never foolish enough to attempt to pronounce ; and she had devoured a couple of small circulating libraries. May be these had done her harm. We poor Writers of Fiction are always making beauty triumphant, and smoothing away the direst social difficulties from the path of merit. "Take her, you dog, take her : there is

thirty thousand pounds upon the mantel-piece, and it's yours," cries the relenting guardian or opulent uncle, in novels of the affections *passim*. And perhaps Mary mistook fiction for real life. Moreover, she had always been made much of, admired, paid court to, while at home, as though she had been a superior being to those about her (which, indeed, to all appearance she was). She was a perfectly modest young woman, but without much humility of mind. She did not think *vin ordinaire* of herself by any means. It is probable she was never impressed with the absolute impossibility of Frederick Galton becoming her husband ; it is certain that she was not by this time—at the period of Mr. Jonathan Johnson's visit to Casterton. She had, it is true, thought the young gentleman an angel, as she listened to his eloquence in the carrier's cart ; but he had given her to understand that he at least reciprocated that sentiment. She had never seen any one so handsome, so brilliant, so attractive, in all her life before ; but neither had he been similarly favoured, and he had told her as much, more than once—an admission which *she*

had not been betrayed into. She had looked up to him, as Endymion to the moon, as though he had been a divinity ; but the luminary had descended of its own accord, and assured her of her mistake. If either of them was more than mortal, he protested that it was not he, but herself.

Then the young gentleman had a powerful ally in the muse. He wrote verses to the beloved object, accusing her of coldness, wherein "Mary" rhymed with "chary," and slipped them into her hand when opportunity offered (which was but seldom) upon the sly. This was the worst feature of Frederick Galton's courtship. It was underhand, secret, and entailed all sorts of lies—white, piebald, and as black as Erebus.

This was the shadow that haunted the good doctor's house. To do him justice, the young fellow had no idea of wronging the poor girl; on the contrary, his deliberate intention—if intentions can be called deliberate which are mainly entertained to excuse present ill-conduct—was to marry her; not to-day, nor to-morrow, but whenever it should be convenient, and

afterwards to educate her, after his own fashion. He would teach her to appreciate Shelley. At present, she wanted insight into that poet, and couldn't abide—she used the word "abide"—his "Sensitive Plant," to which Fred had especially drawn her attention, and indeed had once read to her aloud, in a voice of the deepest feeling. The circumstances under which she had listened to it were indeed every way favourable to poetical sentiment. The young couple were alone, and in a charming spot, on the south side of Leckhamsley Round ; the mighty fosse was almost filled up with underwood, amid which grew innumerable wild flowers. It was there that the village children found the first primrose, and the earliest violet of the year. The blue-bell and the hare-bell rang their silent peals there to every breath of summer wind.

This lovely spot was called by the grateful folks of Casterton, Eden ; and it was also by no means unprovided with serpents. That was the one drawback to the pleasure of wandering in that sunny place, which once, perhaps, had sheltered Caesar : ever and anon,

there would run a shudder through the flowers, and then a reptile would cross your path, and make you shiver in spite of yourself, and though you knew it could not hurt you. Thus it happened on the very day that the "Sensitive Plant" was first read; and the young lady was infinitely alarmed at the occurrence: it was doubtless due to the confusion of that moment that Mr. Frederick Galton made use of a rather warmer expression than their mutual relation warranted.

"These serpents are perfectly harmless," he said, "*dearest.*"

Perhaps she did not hear him; it is certain that she omitted to box his ears. Mary Perling could reach Eden from Casterton by walking about a mile and a quarter; Frederick Galton dared not get thither under five miles. She approached it by the road leading directly to the Round; while he had to leave the village at the other end, and stroll away in the opposite direction, until he could make a safe detour. This may serve for an example of the sort of footing upon which these young folks now stood with respect to others.

There was nothing open and straightforward about it; and the shadow in the unconscious doctor's dwelling darkened daily. It may be thought singular that the father should have been without the least suspicion of anything being wrong with his son, for the lad was certainly changed in manner, and even in disposition. He had often to be addressed more than once before he returned an answer, whereas his ear had been wont to be ever keen and attentive to the paternal voice. His air was becoming distraught; his step had lost its elasticity; he had no appetite for breakfast; his spirits, except by fits and starts, were low. It was a pity that Dr. Galton was a medical man, or else he would scarcely have put *all* these symptoms down to liver.

Mrs. Hartopp also, it may be reasonably imagined, would have kept too vigilant an eye upon her niece to admit such "goings on" to be long undiscovered. But Mary Perling was vigilant too, as the circumstances of the case required. She had the most innocent countenance—"the mirror of the maiden mind within"—that ever was seen; her smile was angelic;

her colour was that delicate rose-tint which belongs to the western clouds a little after the sun has left them — the memory of a hue, rather than the hue itself. As she never blushed like a vulgar peony, her aunt concluded that there was nothing to blush about.

Mary happened to be passing through the entrance-hall when Mr. Johnson called on Monday morning, in pursuance of his promise to Frederick ; and although it was not her place, she answered the ring at the bell. The editor was an enthusiastic (*aesthetic*, of course) admirer of female loveliness, and presently took the liberty of congratulating the doctor (who had remained at home that forenoon on purpose to receive him) upon the comeliness of his domestic. He protested that he had never seen any one so beautiful, and at the same time so modest-looking.

“Ay, ay indeed,” said the doctor, “she is a pretty lass enough.”

“Which of them was it, father ?” inquired Frederick carelessly, who had been upstairs at the time of Mr. Johnson’s arrival.

"*Which of them was it?*" repeated Mr. Johnson, without stuttering, and italics. "Is it possible, then, that this household comprises *another* such?"

"O nonsense, Frederick," interposed the doctor. "It must have been Mary, of course; there can be no sort of doubt."

Presently, Sally came in, bearing the luncheon-tray in her mottled hands. Frederick looked with steadiness and determination at the grate, but he felt that the visitor had his eye upon him, and that it was not the fire alone which was making his ingenuous countenance crimson to the roots of his hair. What demon of indiscretion had induced him to make such an observation, I know not; nor did he know himself; he only knew that he had made it. *Which of them was it*—that is, Mary or Sally?

If such double-distilled hypocrisy had evoked almost a reproof from the simple doctor, what must a shrewd man of the world, like Mr. Jonathan Johnson, think of it? Frederick would have treated his own remark as a piece of humour,—a jest—but the time was gone

by for that. He ventured to look up while the other two were making conversation, with as unconcerned a glance as he could assume, but dropped his eyes immediately, while a shudder ran through his veins.

Dr. Galton was pointing out the top of the Round from the window, but the editorial gaze was not wholly following his directions : it was fixed in part upon Mr. Frederick Galton, and was saying, as plainly as eye could speak : " You are certainly the most impudent young humbug We ever beheld."

Mr. Jonathan Johnson fraternised greatly with the doctor : his guileless and inartificial character delighted the town-reared gentleman, whose study was mankind. The home-made sausages, which had formed a portion of their late meal, were such as could not be got in the metropolis, and excited the rapture of the guest : the host expatiated upon them as a more fashionable gentleman would have scorned to do, except upon his wines—but then what the doctor said was true. He described minutely the different parts which made up the harmonious whole. " Mrs. Hartopp," said he, warm-

ing with his subject, "was equal to even greater achievements : mince-pies for example — there were some upon the table, and Mr. Johnson might judge for himself."

The editor was dyspeptic, and avoided all pastry upon principle, but, nevertheless, he despatched one of these country dainties with much content. "It is exquisite," said he; "but perhaps it requires a little cor—cor—cor"—

"Get the French Brandy, Fred ;" exclaimed the doctor, whose practised ear was acutely sensitive to the physical needs of his fellow-creatures. "A corrective, as you suggest, cannot possibly hurt one ; but there is nothing whatever unwholesome in that pie. Mr. Absit, our non-resident rector here, and an excellent judge of good things, gave me the condiments for it in his own handwriting before he went abroad. He recommends that the mince-meat be buried in the earth a week or two. I am sorry your visit to Casterton is such a flying one : if you could have stayed over dinner time, you should have tasted our black

puddings ; they are made after another of the rector's recipes, and a very characteristic one. 'Chop the fat,' writes he, '*into pieces of the size of small dice.*' He was too much given to play, especially for a clergyman." Thus rattled on the genial doctor, well pleased to have so eminent a listener as the conductor of the *Paternoster Porcupine*, who, he had Frederick's word for it, was one of the most intellectual men in Europe.

At last, however, the inevitable gig came to the door, and host and guest shook hands with cordiality. The doctor, however, little knew that upon that stranger's decision as to the literary value of certain manuscripts upstairs, which he himself had never even set eyes upon, depended mainly what profession his son would follow for the rest of his life.

Master Frederick, too, little knew it was owing to the favourable impression that his kind-hearted father had produced on the editorial mind, rather than to the intrinsic value of the performance itself, that his critic presently bore the infliction of the Carthaginian novel so good-naturedly.

"Do you think, sir, that the Punic tale will do for the *Porcupine?* " demanded the youth with diffidence, not unmixed with hope, after he had read several selections.

"Bless my soul and body, no, sir," returned the editor with irritation ; "nor the epic poem either ; nor the confounded rubbish about the probability of your finding an early tomb ; nor any of those things of which you think most highly. But you entertained me yesterday with a most excellent account of Bat-folding ; write that out at length in your best English, and I will send it to the printers at once, and give you a couple of guineas."

The enthusiastic lad could have embraced this bald-pated Mæcenas, who had thus unbarred for him the jealous gates of Literature. He wanted to accompany him to Mr. Morrit's house, in order to see the last of such a benefactor ; but Mr. Johnson declined that attention, upon the plea that he had only an hour to spend with his old friend, and wished to have some private talk with him.

If Mr. Frederick Galton had known *why* he wished it, so far from being grateful, he would perhaps have made a desperate attempt to strangle his Mæcenas, before he left the paternal threshold.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INFORMER.

THE Rev. Robert Morrit was an old bachelor, and a somewhat selfish person, as all bachelors are, and perhaps one or two married men also, but yet he really loved and admired his nephew. He was opposed to his adopting literature as a calling, but he would have been mortified to hear that the lad's talents were not sufficient for the exercise of that profession, and therefore awaited Mr. Johnson's verdict with some anxiety.

"Well, and what do you make of my boy, eh ? Is he up to the standard ? Is he fit to be enrolled in the ragged regiment ?"

The editor was a little piqued at this, for he himself had at one time been unappreciated by publishers,

and, unless for his Fellowship, would scarcely have fared sumptuously, or employed a very fashionable tailor. "He will do very well for a drummer-boy," returned he. "There is no knowing what he may turn out, but at present I can detect no idiosyncrasy"—

"I am glad of it," interrupted the curate snappishly. "I never hear that word without thinking it is derived from 'idiots' and 'crazy.' People generally use it without in the least knowing what it means, and when they do know, they attach a value to it which it does not possess. There is no class so untractable and unsatisfactory at college as your idiosyncratic young gentlemen—boys who imagine themselves adapted for some exceptional pursuit, which is usually a more or less disreputable one. *I* know them well, sir." And the curate looked at the editor as if he knew *him* particularly well. "Nay, sir," he continued, "they are very often mistaken even in that, and have no more real affinity with their self-chosen pursuits than the wood-cut of a halfpenny ballad has with the subject

it embellishes, or the glees at a public dinner have to the toasts which they accompany."

"The toasts are sometimes very appropriate," returned the other drily. "I was at a dinner the other day at the London Tavern, where 'Ye Spotted Snakes with Double Tongue,' immediately succeeded 'The Clergy.'"

At this Mr. Morrit fell into such a fit of laughter, that large tears stood in his eyes. His indignation was altogether quenched.

"Did you really hear that, Johnson? Yes, I'm sure you must have done so, for you could never have invented anything half so good. But don't let us quarrel, my good sir; we two are very old friends, Jonathan."

"'Ye Spotted Snakes with Double Tongue,'" repeated that gentleman. "What is it you are driving at, Morrit?"

"Well, Johnson, the fact is I am deeply interested in Master Fred, and in all that is likely to happen to him. I don't consider myself a dull man, and I know that he is a far cleverer fellow than I was at his age.

Your pretence of his being an ordinary lad is simply ridiculous; nobody knows that better than yourself: now, I depend upon your judgment in this matter, so tell me truly what you think."

"Well, then, Morrit," returned the other frankly, "if you want the truth, you shall have it; and, indeed, I should have thought it my duty to tell it you, in any case, before I left your roof. I perceive that his father, or you, or whoever is to have the management of that youth, will have no easy task on his hands"—

"He is a fine-hearted, high-spirited fellow," interrupted Mr. Morrit warmly, "frank and fresh as the spring-time, open and honest as the dawn."

The other regarded this enthusiasm with much serenity, scratching his nose, and yawning, until the outbreak had subsided, and then remarked: "Of his honesty—so far as respecting other people's goods is concerned—I have no doubt; but as for his openness"—

"Ah, there you're wrong," broke in the curate; "upon his perfect candour, I would stake my existence."

"Stake your stuff and nonsense!" stammered the

editor. "Don't try to come over *me* with any new-fangled notions about the moral perfection of boys. Those may suit mothers very well; but in the mouth of a bachelor uncle, addressing a bachelor friend, they are simply senseless. The boy is exceedingly clever, has great fertility of thought, and genuine humour, and will, in short, be quite up to the mark of the *Porcupine* —in a year or two. But with those gifts, and doubtless much kindness of disposition, you must be content, Morrit; for in morals, I believe Don Juan might have derived advantage from his experience, while in hypocrisy and bare-faced effrontery, I know that the lad exceeds Tartuffe!"

"Tartuffe!" gasped the Rev. Robert Morrit—"my nephew exceeds Tartuffe!"

Then Mr. Jonathan Johnson bluntly delivered his reasons for suspecting that Master Frederick Galton was courting Miss Mary Perling, "a most excellent mince-pie maker, but in other respects, I should think, scarcely fitted to become your niece by marriage."

"Niece by marriage!" muttered the curate, repeating

the other's words, to assure himself that his ears were not deceiving him. Then recovering himself as by a jerk from a sort of lethargy, induced by the mere supposition of such a calamity, he added, with cheerfulness : "My dear fellow, you have some exceedingly good points, but you always were a ridiculous idiot, and a ridiculous idiot you will be until the day you die."

"Very good," responded the editor coolly. "You don't believe me. What was evidence enough for me, I suppose does not suffice for a divine, who always thinks the best of everybody, and leans by nature towards charity. Perhaps, however, you will believe the young gentleman's own handwriting. While he was reading to me a rather uninteresting narrative concerning ancient Carthage, I amused myself with turning over his other manuscripts; thrust among them, as though he had been suddenly disturbed in its composition, I found an unfinished copy of verses addressed to the young lady in question, which I am quite certain (if I do remember my own youth) were not by any means his first attempt upon this inspiring

subject. He could not have written it, I am very sure, unless some of the same sort had been favourably received before. I have a pretty good memory, and I shall be delighted to repeat the poem, if you like; but you must be prepared for a little warmth of expression.—You have no wish to hear it? That's a pity, too; for, for a ridiculous idiot, I am thought to have some little talent for recitation. However, you can ask him for the verses yourself; there can be no mistake about them. They are addressed to M. P.; and I was very nearly passing them over, under the impression that they were of a political character. I don't much care for the political opinions of young gentlemen of seventeen. *He is* seventeen, is he not, Morrit?"

"Barely that, if so much," groaned the curate, sinking back into the chair, from which he had discharged himself like a rocket, at the first touch of these evil tidings. "What on earth should be done with such a young reprobate?"

"Well, if you ask my opinion—but there, I am only a ridiculous idiot—I should say, let the boy have

change of scene and people as soon as possible. Send him to the university next month, instead of in October; you will easily get them to take him in a by-term at Minim Hall; and let the young lady go home to her friends immediately."

"The artful minx shall not stay another day in the house," quoth the curate, with virtuous indignation.

"I shall be happy to take her in my fly," returned the other grinning. "What will you give me, if I engage her young affections, and persuade her to throw your nephew overboard, eh? They say that almost all the secret service-money is expended upon persons who, by their self-sacrifice, prevent mésalliances of this kind among the aristocracy. The bishoprics are notoriously devoted as rewards for assistance of this nature."

At this moment, however, the vehicle appeared at the door, and thereby put out of the question the disinterested offer of Mr. Jonathan Johnson.

"I trust you will pass your word, Johnson, not to let this disgraceful affair be known," appealed the curate, with earnestness.

"Certainly, my good sir, certainly ; but you must not mind my putting it into the *Porcupine*—in the form of story, that is. It will be so highly spiced" [the curate winced], "that nobody would ever recognise the raw materials of the thing. I live by my wits, you see, and really cannot afford to let the matter escape me altogether. Good-bye, my dear fellow. I sincerely trust that everything may turn out in accordance with the interests of respectability, but if not, and the young people insist upon being married—well there, don't be angry, its merely a supposition—I say, if they *do* insist, then be sure they send me wedding-cards and a bit of the cake. I should think," muttered the departing cynic, as the wheels crunched dully over the snow—"I should think she'd make a wedding-cake exceedingly well."

CHAPTER X.

DEPARTED.

MR. FREDERICK GALTON, whom some of his best friends would still persist in calling Master Freddy, had evil dreams on the night that Mr. Jonathan Johnson left Casterton. He tossed and tumbled restlessly upon his little bed till he got the sheets untucked at the foot, when we all know what happened ; he had to rise and put things to rights, and getting warm again was not so very easy. It was impossible for an author, whose reputation was about to become European, to sink into slumber like any tired school-boy. He was eaten up with premonitions of greatness. The man who wakes to find himself famous, almost always rather anticipates the pleasant surprise overnight. When Frederick did get to sleep after his four-and-twentieth

round or so with the pillow, it was only to see Fame nearer than ever. She ran beside him with a trumpet in each hand, and "Hail, thou great popular novelist!" cried she, between the flourishes—"hail, mighty poet, hail!" The winged horse seemed actually at his door, its bridle-rein held by Mary Perling, as the muse of amorous poetry, and he was about to mount it, when Mr. Jonathan Johnson appeared with a pair of enormous shears—the horrid weapons of the critic—and set to work clipping Pegasus. The noise of this operation was as the creaking of cart-wheels, insufficiently greased. He was not sure, as he sat up in his bed and listened, but that it really *was* cart-wheels, mixed with the barking of a dog; the dim grey morn was breaking, and he would have risen and looked out of the window to convince himself, but it was too cold; as it was, drowsiness overcame curiosity. Some people say there is a mysterious affinity between the souls of lovers, which will not permit the one to be ignorant of anything serious that happens to the other. This may be so in some cases, but it certainly failed in that of Master Frederick;

perhaps it does not take effect until one or both the parties are of age. Otherwise, our hero would surely have been cognizant that the carrier's cart, the very chariot which had brought his goddess to Casterton, was at that moment in the act of conveying her away. His father was anxiously watching her departure from his dressing-room window. Mrs. Hartopp, in a garment composed entirely of flannel, was packing her into the vehicle. Mr. Jacob Lunes was arranging his parcels so as to offer her the least possible inconvenience. She herself was watching the white curtain behind Frederick's window, trusting to see it move, to get a wave of the hand, a motion of the head to carry away with her in her heart to comfort her. But the curtain hung unstirred as in the chamber of Death itself. Frederick Galton turned himself round, drew the bed-clothes with blind solicitude over his left shoulder, and fell fast asleep again.

Nobody called him on that Tuesday morning. Mrs. Hartopp could not trust herself even to shape the conventional statement that it was eight o'clock. He slept

on till nine ; and when he came down to breakfast, the doctor was already departed upon his professional tour. He was literally afraid to see his son. If he had entertained a suspicion of vice in the matter, of wrong to the poor girl, he would have sought him face to face at once, and rebuked him with words of fire. But he was convinced that Frederick had fallen in love with Mary Perling in all honour, and he dreaded to behold him while Love and Duty should be tugging in opposite directions at his heartstrings. "It is all my fault," muttered the good doctor again and again, anathematising his own imprudence in having taken Mary into the house at all—"it is all my own fault;" so that one or two of his patients who did not feel any better that morning re-echoed the sentiment, with some horror. "All your own fault, doctor? Goodness gracious, have you been giving me the wrong medicine?"

"Far from it, madam," he would reply ; "there is a decided improvement ; greater activity, more firmness ;" for the doctor always spoke of the subjects of his care as though they were Railway Shares.

But as soon as he was in his gig again, the superficial smile would fade away, and the old man would shake his head, and mutter within the folds of his double shawl: "It is all my own fault—all mine." Rarely, indeed, had he passed a more melancholy night than that which had just elapsed.

Mr. Morrit had written to say: "As soon as Fred has taken himself to bed, I must have a talk with you." And he had come and repeated the information which Mr. Jonathan Johnson had laid against the lad. The doctor never attempted to refute it: a hundred little circumstances of suspicion thronged about his brain, all stung into life by this one piece of evidence, which would else have never risen up to vex him, just as paste eels, which have lain lifeless in the dry for years, and would do so for ever, will become, upon the application of a drop of water, as lively as grigs.

"I see it all now," groaned the doctor, with his head in his hands.

"I hope you do," returned his brother-in-law drily.

Something in the tone jarred harshly upon the other's

ear. "I will answer," he said, "for my son's honour with my own."

"Just what I said to Johnson about his openness," remarked Mr. Morrit, "before I learned these stubborn facts."

"He may have been—he *has* been weak; but believe me, Robert"—

"I do believe *you*," interrupted the other, grasping his hand; "but that must suffice. Let us now take nothing for granted, but make certain of the future. That girl must go at sunrise to-morrow; I have told the carrier to call for the luggage."

"Poor girl!" sighed the doctor tenderly.

"Yes, that is *one* objection to her," rejoined the curate grimly; "she is poor, but that is by no means the worst. She is an insolvent carpenter's daughter. She has been your hired servant. I never noticed it, but I dare say she has not got an *h* to her name."

"Yet suppose Frederick insists?"

"Galton, you talk like a fool," broke forth the other angrily. "*He* insist! What! a boy, a child? Is it

possible that you can ever picture to yourself the giving way to a wicked whim of this kind, the acquiescence in his cutting his own throat at the very threshold of the world? Would you give your consent, under any circumstances imaginable, to your son's making a low marriage?"

The doctor's head was bowed; he answered nothing, but held his hand up piteously, as though he would say: "Spare me; you do not understand; you never had a son."

"Then let us hear nothing more of such vicious weakness," continued the curate. "When your son wakes to-morrow morning, and finds the girl gone, he will comprehend it all, without your having to say a word about it; or, if he wants to argue upon the subject, refer him to *me*. By Thursday night, he will be at Minim Hall, for I have written to the President by this day's post, who will take him in, even though it be vacation-time, for my sake. I wish he was going there to-morrow. A fortnight of Camford life will doubtless go far to eradicate this foolish passion."

Thus had the two elders settled it between them ; and the girl was gone.

Master Frederick breakfasted, and lounged into the kitchen, with a passing glance into the housekeeper's room, where Mrs. Hartopp was so very busily engaged that she did not even turn her head to look at him as he went by.

Mottled Sally, streaked with flour, was engaged with dough and a rolling-pin. For any delicacy of touch possessed by her, she might have been the donkey who, in the well-known advertisement, levels lawns by help of the patent roller. "Making pastry, eh, Sally ?" remarked the young gentleman, with his eyes roving in vain after the Beloved Object.

"Only dumplings, Master Frederick ; and even that is far too fine a job for me. But there, as Mrs. Hartopp says, she can't do everything ; and we must get on in the best way we can, now Mary Perling's gone and left us."

"Mary gone !" cried Frederick.

"O yes, sir ; she went this morning in Mr. Lunes his

cart.—Don't ye whirl about like that with your coat-tails, Master Frederick. Lor, if you haven't a covered yourself with flour!"

"Are they gone to the railway station?" asked the young man impatiently, with his hand on the door-latch.

"Yes, Master Frederick; but it's too late to send anything by the cart now, for it's a-coming back by this time. La, how she did yowl, to be sure, and you never to have heard nothin' of it, though it were under your very window!"

"Yowl!" echoed the young man passionately.
"What do you mean, woman?"

"The bull-pup, sir. Mr. Lunes had tied her under the cart this morning, for the first time, and you might have heard her atop of the Round."

A crooked smile found its way to Frederick Galton's lips; he staggered back to the lobby, and took down his coat and hat mechanically. Inside the latter was pinned a little piece of paper, with "Remember me" upon it. Under what circumstances must those few

syllables have been pencilled—in what sorrow, what wretchedness ! Yes, he would remember her, so help him Heaven. Nay, he would do more ; he would follow her, and that directly. Oldborough, where her home lay, was only five-and-thirty miles, as the crow flew. To him, who was not a crow, it was indeed nearer fifty ; but he could at least reach the railway station in time for the evening train ; he knew the hour at which it started, for his love had rendered the Oldborough branch as a bough with murmuring doves upon it, and the half-page of Bradshaw which contained it was a sacred poem. He would be with her yet by the 8.45 train P.M. But this undertaking of Abelard was not to be.

“Master Frederick Galton !” said a voice that should have been familiar to him, but of whose identity, since it had never hitherto called him anything but Master Freddy, he might well have doubts—“I was directed to inform you that your father would be home at one o’clock. He went out earlier this morning, on purpose to be at home to lunch with you.”

The young man stood irresolutely upon the door-step. He had never dreamed that the prospect of an interview with his own father could have filled him with such aversion and dismay.

"The doctor left this letter for you in the breakfast-room, sir; he meant to put it on the table, but being much agitated this morning, he laid it on his desk, where you did not see it."

Frederick tore open the envelope with an anxiety he took no pains to conceal.

"MY DEAR FREDERICK—I have sent Mary Perling away; no father could have done otherwise; but I do not wish to increase your sorrow by my reproaches. I feel, indeed, that I am more to blame in the matter than yourself. I shall return to-day to luncheon, and meet you as though nothing had happened. A few months hence, and we shall both be able to talk over all this with calmness. In the meantime, let us keep silence for both our sakes. By to-morrow evening, you will be at the university. It would have spared

me some hours of bitter sorrow, if you had been sent there six months ago, as your uncle wished. I did all for the best, as I tried to persuade myself; but I now know that I acted selfishly: I did wrong, but it was all out of my great love for you, Fred.—Always your loving father,

“WILLIAM GALTON.”

So there was to be no dreadful explanation after all—that was one comfort; and he was to be despatched to Camford within twenty-four hours—that was another comfort. Life in Casterton, now that Mary Perling had left it, would, he felt, be unendurable. As for giving her up, as for any final separation between him and her, such an idea never crossed his mind. He saw, indeed, that his father took it for granted; and he felt it was better so, than that they should dispute on a question upon which his whole soul answered yea to the doctor’s nay. The contemplation of anything but a union with Mary, in the end, was impossible to him. He was miserable enough in its mere postponement,

The sun was withdrawn from his heaven as for an arctic winter, and there was nothing for it but to wait wearily for that dawn with which comes not only day but spring, and the brief glory of the year. She seemed to have been the breath of life to him, and that in her absence he existed but by some inadequate system of artificial respiration. The leafless trees looked barer and more comfortless, now that she had gone. The robins, finishing the breakfast-crumbs which he had strewn, as usual, on the window-sill, had a less cheerful note of gratitude. He took the long white road that led between banks of snow to "the Round," and surveyed once more that view of which Mr. Jonathan Johnson had said "it looks like Death." And now it seemed that the editor had been right. The beautiful dingle Eden, where he had first called her "dearest," lay beneath him, with its every bramble laden with snow; nor was it more altered from its summer aspect than were his present feelings from those with which he had last visited it. The very bush beneath which they two had sat together, stood

out in its smooth shining garment like a tombstone. He was very, very wretched. All the world he had ever known lay stretched beneath him for the last time ; for this leave-taking, his susceptible imagination represented as a final adieu. It was a scene very dear to him ; his life had hitherto passed happily in the midst of it ; he would have had no desire to exchange it for Camford or any other place, but for what had happened that morning. He had never estimated it, as it seemed, at its proper value until now. There were a score of places distinguishable to him from where he stood, notwithstanding their uniform white raiment, with each of which some pleasure was associated. It is true that they weighed nothing in comparison with that spot which I have already mentioned, hallowed by the first avowal of his love ; but they helped to burden his heart. After a little, however, as his thoughts became less selfish, his face began to kindle, and his chin to cease to drop upon his chest.

"I will bring her hither as my wife," cried he aloud : "she shall stand side by side with me upon this Round ; and so shall all things here be made doubly dear to me."

CHAPTER XI.**MINIM HALL.**

MINIM HALL at Camford is by no means an extensive institution. It is, as compared with most of the other royal and pious foundations of that university, as were the principality of Mentone or the republic of San Marino to the great European powers. It was concerning Minim Hall that the witticism was originally promulgated, that there were but three men in the college, whereof one did not speak to anybody, and the other two were not on speaking-terms with each other. The men of third-rate colleges would even assert that they had never been able to discover this retired little establishment at all. But St. Boniface, whose Hall would have held all the small-college men together—St. Boniface, whose foundation is so exten-

sive that its Fellows are found from Indus to the Pole in all sorts of superior social conditions, and one of whom, having purchased an insular property in the Caribbean Sea, but lately requested of the Seniority permission to draw his dividends a few months sooner than usual, *because he was about to levy war against a neighbouring island*—St. Boniface, I say—the Leviathan—rather affected Minim Hall. It was from the former that the three undergraduates belonging to the duodecimo institution always drew their fourth man, and made up their rubber.

Of course, the excessive diminutiveness of the Hall was not without its disadvantages. The election of its chief was a hole-and-corner affair, in the hands of five persons, each of whom wished to nominate himself. Upon one occasion, they had no less than five elections without coming to any result, in consequence of this distribution of interests, when, upon the motion of one Dr. Slyboots, the final consideration of the matter was fixed for the sixteenth of the ensuing month. Now, the doctor only, of these sapient persons, was aware

that the power of electing a Principal would lapse into the Chancellor's hands upon the fifteenth ; so, on the previous day, he took post-horses to London, humbugged that eminent functionary in some subtle manner, and returned with the appointment in his own pocket. The electors assembled the next morning and, as usual, arrived at no decision ; but the doctor saved them all further trouble and uncertainty, by producing his credentials, and installing himself in the Principal's lodge. After this, the struggle was allowed to be between two persons only ; but even then, there were strange things done in the little Republic. For example, let us suppose A and B were the two candidates. As a matter of courtesy, it is understood, on all such occasions, that B votes for A, and A for B. B is the less popular of the pair at Minim Hall, and yet he gets elected thus : No. 1 votes for A, No. 2 votes for A, and A votes for B ; No. 3 votes for B, and B votes for *himself*, and becomes President. I am speaking, of course, of a state of things that has been long exploded, and did not exist even at the time when

Mr. Frederick Galton went up to Minim Hall. Its Principal at that period—Dr. Hermann—would on no account have acted as B did. He was a hearty, honest gentleman, of the church-and-king and port-wine school, whose merits people are too little anxious, now-a-days, to disclose; while, on the other hand, their frailties are in all the penny papers.

He respected Mr. Morrit (notwithstanding that story of the “twenty” port), as being a defender of his slowly-dying political faith, as well as the cleverest man that had ever emerged from the hallowed precincts of the Hall; not excepting Mr. Jonathan Johnson, whom he deemed a revolutionary ingrate, unworthy of consideration—a democratic serpent, whom a conservative Alma Mater had nourished in her too confiding bosom.

Mr. Frederick Galton was therefore welcomed by the Principal with open arms, and received very different treatment from that experienced generally by freshmen from college dons.

The President actually took the young man for a walk on the morning after his arrival, and pointed out

to him the various objects of interest in the deserted city; not, indeed, so genially as some ciceroni might have done, but still he did it. One does not expect such a Great Authority to be genial, and if he be even civil, it is a matter of surprise and thankfulness; as Dr. Johnson observed in respect to another matter, it is like a dog standing upon his hind-legs; he does not do it well, but one is astonished that he does it at all. Dr. Hermann did not by any means do it well, but snapped out his information in the most indigestible and disjointed form conceivable. The solemn smileless man had a habit of keeping his eyes shut, which, according to one set of college wits, accounted for his political opinions, and according to another, for his “never seeing a happy moment.” Long experience, however, enabled him to calculate when he had arrived at any remarkable spot in the university.

The Principal of Minim Hall had written elaborately upon the Greek Particles, but he knew very little of men.*

* Is it possible this author would have had us print it *μεν?*”—*Chorus of Printers' Devils.*

As for modern literature, he had never read (for instance) Thomas Carlyle, and if he had heard of him, confused him with the notorious demagogue of the same name, and would have had him conveyed to instant execution.

He considered any man to be a fool or a rascal who advocated any opinions but his (Dr. Hermann's) own and the language he was permitted to use in Camford Combination Rooms, would not have been tolerated elsewhere.

He told some excellent stories to his young friend, upon this their first day of acquaintanceship, which he had been accustomed to tell at least four times a week for the last thirty years.

Dr. Hermann was, indeed, in many respects, as Mr. J. Johnson used irreverently to term him, "a solemn idiot;" but he was a worthy, honest gentleman for all that. The sun of prosperity had shone too long upon the stagnant waters of his life, but there was good bottom under the mud. Mr. Morrit had briefly described to him the nature of his nephew's case, without, however,

compromising the family honour, we may be sure, by hinting at the position in life of Miss Mary Perling ; and the old gentleman was really touched by the lad's calamity and evident mental distress. Perhaps his mind reverted to those far-back days wherein he had first wooed his own Euphemia, and had won that jewel, but not by any means worn her. The wooing of a college tutor may be often not long a-doing ; but the day on which he may call the beloved one " wife," may be distant a quarter of a century. He may court a maiden with hair as black as the raven's wing, and wed her when its hue is that of the owl. If she had but the gift of foresight, she might even marry somebody else in the meanwhile, and be a widow ready for his unchanged affections by the time when the college living falls vacant, and permits him to claim her, or the mastership of the college becomes his portion, and he is enabled to strike off the chains of celibacy with extraordinary pomp.

One of the really most romantic views of a great college is taken from this stand-point; dismiss the

historical associations connected with it altogether—the musty, fusty memories of mathematicians and philosophers who have long since been dust—and fix your gaze upon the great army of female martyrs who are so wistfully regarding its slow vicissitudes. These betrothed virgins—for widows have not the requisite patience—the young, the middle-aged, and even the somewhat advanced in years, turn daily their anxious eyes upon the *Times* for the obituaries and the preferments; they charitably rejoice when an old gentleman is relieved of his earthly burden, or removed at last “to a more extended sphere of usefulness,” by getting a living, for each of these changes is a step which brings them nearer to their beloved.

When Death beckons a rector to leave the pulpit for the vaults beneath, Hymen is beckoning to some other member of the same religious society to come to the altar. While the widow is packing up and leaving the rectory in tears, the bride is thinking it high time she should be gone, and putting on the white garments

and wreath of orange-flowers that ought to have been donned years ago.

In the gift of Minim Hall, there were but two livings, and one evil-spoken-of perpetual curacy, which nobody could be got to take, so that Dr. Hermann had had to wait for his Euphemia for many years : and it was whispered in Combination Rooms—which, however, to say the truth, could scarcely be worse in the matter of scandal even if female Fellows *were* admitted to them—that, after all, the doctor would willingly be off his bargain.

To have such patient virtue rewarded by a shrew at last, was indeed sad enough ; but perhaps the very waiting had done it. Like the genie in the bottle, which the fisherman nets in the *Arabian Nights*, the milk of human kindness may have turned in Euphemia by reason of the long delay : for the first five years, she may have had the best intentions of being a perfect consort ; for the next five, she may have determined to have been at least not worse than other men's wives ; in the third lustrum (when she took to caps), she got to

brood over her wrongs; and during the fourth and last, it is possible she made up her mind, that when she did become Mrs. Hermann, the doctor should smart for it.

It was, however, of his days of wooing that the Principal of Minim Hall was reminded by the advent of the young freshman, and his heart was stirred with divine pity, which can even touch the souls of college dons. Fred's case was a really pitiable one. His animal spirits, and natural desire to make himself agreeable, increased by his sense of the doctor's kindness, sustained him while he was talking or listening, but if left to himself even for a minute, he relapsed into a lethargy of woe. His imagination was in Eden, his heart was in Oldborough, and it was only the body and bones of him which were wandering about Camford streets in company with the venerable Principal of Minim Hall.

To any new-comer into a town which is to be his future home, it seems, for a day or two, as though the streets, the buildings, the churches, will never become

familiar to him, although in a week's time it will be impossible to recall the sense of strangeness which they at first produced; but Frederick Galton could hardly be said to have seen Camford at all.

The cloistered courts of the colleges, made vaster even than usual by the absence of their inhabitants, the carven bridges, linking lawn with lawn across the sluggish stream, the lime-tree avenues, the echoing dining-halls, and all the characteristic features of the place flashed for a moment upon his outward eyes, and straightway vanished. If he had been transported from the place for ever at the conclusion of his second day there, his recollection of it, in spite of the distinguished patronage under which it was presented to him, would have been confined almost solely to Minim Hall. "The university of Camford," he would have replied, if questioned, "consists of two exactly parallel rows of buildings, placed in an enormous space, and wanting the other two sides that should make up its square. During my visit to this interesting locality (which it is fair to say happened in vacation-time),

there were no persons occupying the various suits of apartments into which these blocks are divided ; but in full term-time there are said to be no less than three under-graduates in residence, beside the officials—namely, the Principal, the Vice-principal, the Dean, the Tutor, and the Bursar ; but the last four offices (with some others) are discharged by the same individual. The chapel is an elegant structure, capable of containing all the members of Minim Hall that ever existed, or ever shall do so, calculating the annual influx of *alumni* at one per annum—which is the average for the last hundred years, &c.”

The Vice-principal, Dean, Tutor, and Bursar was snipe-shooting in Norfolk, so that, if Dr. Hermann had not invited Frederick to his hospitable board, the young man would have dined alone, and afterwards, probably, invested Minim Hall with a ghostly interest for ever by hanging himself in the spacious wilderness upon which the windows of its Combination Room abut. Instead of this, however, the solitary freshman was entertained at “the Lodge” by the Principal and Euphemia. “ You

see we are quite in the family way, young man," observed that lady in apology for the humble fare, which consisted of four most excellent courses and a pine-apple; "but there is absolutely nothing to be got in Camford during vacation-time." This was a stereotyped phrase of the lady's whenever she had provided something better than common for her table, notwithstanding she had once received for answer: "It is not good, madam, but it will *do*," from our friend, Mr. Jonathan Johnson. That original and rather rude response gave him a reputation in Camford for years, but it excluded him from the Lodge at Minim Hall for ever. The truth is, that Euphemia herself was not in her heart of hearts a hospitable person; but her lord was her master in the matter of viands; he could put up with a great deal of snubbing, and he did, but it was dangerous to under-feed him.

The caged lion is meek enough, and will perform almost any part at the beck of its keeper; but let the man beware how he tampers with the culinary arrangements of that noble creature! The doctor had parted

with his birthright as the superior animal, but it was not for a mess of pottage. There was a tacit understanding that soup and fish, and flesh and fowl, ay, and eke dessert, were to be set before him daily; otherwise, the standard of revolt would assuredly be raised.

By these means, the Principal of Minim Hall always procured guests, who, in prospect of a less sumptuous banquet, would perhaps have been deterred by the presence of Euphemia.

Phemy—as she was called, by elision, in the Combination Rooms—was not popular in the university. She was tall, high-cheeked, bony, and considered herself to have a mission to repress immorality. Mr. Jonathan Johnson (but this was after war had been openly declared between the lady and himself) used to aver that nature had intended her for a Scotch gamekeeper, and even went so far as to draw fancy sketches of her (for private circulation) in Caledonian costume. She was in reality more like a lady-abbess, as pictured by an Exeter Hall artist, and would have enjoyed that part of her professional duties which included bricking-up-

alive the Erring, most amazingly. Being Protestant, however, to the backbone (of which she had plenty), she ought to have been an old maid, and kept a school. How she would have watered the milk, and thinned the currants in the puddings, and confiscated to domestic purposes the parcels from home ! She was a woman, however, still, in spite of Mr. Johnson's insinuations to the contrary, and Master Frederick Galton's youth and good looks were not without their effect upon her. She did not know that his tender melancholy arose from a misplaced attachment to a young person out at service. She was very affable to him on the evening of his arrival, when the three dined together. She asked after his mother, and upon learning that he had none, assured him of her genuine sympathy, for that she also was motherless ; which, indeed, it was high time that she should be. She would have put her napkin to her eye, upon making this affecting statement, but upon perceiving that it was a clean one, she thought better of it, and produced her pocket-handkerchief, which was not open to the same objection ; but the opportunity

and the tear had both passed away by that time, so she only blew her nose. She was always ready to perform that operation, being one of that extensive class of females who are never without a cold in their heads.

In the course of the repast, she confided to her young guest how much of everything of which he had partaken had cost; and informed him generally what an expensive establishment she had to keep up, and what a great responsibility she had. It was not an intellectual conversation, but since she did all the talking, and what she said required very little attention, Frederick was well content. His mind was far away from Mrs. Hermann's statistics, and she was gratified to observe that his appetite was extremely moderate. There would be all the more to be hashed next day, when he would be "company" no longer, and there would be no necessity for any display. But in this matter she had reckoned without the host.

"I have asked Mr. and Miss de Lernay to meet our young friend to-morrow, my dear," observed the doctor,

when half a bottle of excellent sherry had encouraged him to make confession.

“Indeed!” returned the lady stiffly. “They dined here last week. I wonder” (sarcastically) “that they don’t get tired of dining here.”

“If they did, I suppose they would not come, my dear. The fact is, Mr. Galton, I want you to know them, for until the men come up you will find it dull enough up here. Monsieur de Lernay belongs to Minim Hall, and is, like yourself, but an undergraduate.”

“The Principal is ridiculous!” ejaculated Mrs. Hermann, sharply.

“What principle is ridiculous? What does this foolish woman mean?” thought Frederick to himself. It was very fortunate, however, that he did not assent to her proposition, as his indifference prompted him to do; for whenever Euphemia was displeased with her husband, she was accustomed to refer to him in the third person, as “the Principal.” “The Principal is wrong; the Principal is incredible; the Principal is absurd”—a habit which sometimes led strangers

into the most unintentional rudeness towards the worthy doctor.

“The explanation of the matter is this,” observed the host, with heightened colour:—“Monsieur de Lernay is as old as I, or”—he was about to add, “as Mrs. Hermann;” but his courage was not equal to his indignation—“as old as I, or I am much mistaken; but he entered nominally, last year, as an undergraduate. He does not live in college, but with his daughter Eugenie, a most charming young lady, in the town. He wishes to perfect himself in classical attainments—a most creditable ambition—and has therefore taken up his residence at Camford. A French nobleman, whom misfortunes and an attachment to his legitimate sovereign have driven from his native country, he is, of course, received among us with open arms; and still more so, as you will easily believe when you see her, is the charming Eugenie.”

“The Principal is indecorous in the extreme!” exclaimed the lady of the house.”

“Not at all, madam—not at all,” rejoined the doctor,

who was growing bolder with every glass. “In a town where there is little female society, like Camford, a beautiful, young, and accomplished lady is a welcome addition, indeed, to our social gatherings.—I mentioned to Monsieur de Lernay that you were alone here, and he at once expressed a wish for an opportunity of making your acquaintance.—Let us have the Ruffs and Reeves, my dear, and then we shall have a pleasant entertainment.”

The Ruffs and Reeves were not additional guests, as Frederick at the time imagined, but some birds peculiar to the locality, and very excellent eating, which were at that time hanging in the doctor’s larder.

“Have you any further orders to communicate?” inquired the lady, rising to leave the table. She spoke with asperity, but not with unmitigated defiance, for she knew it was the doctor’s hour of might—the after-dinner hour—that one twenty-fourth part of their combined existence wherein his will was law.

“Nothing, my dear—nothing,” was the bland reply.

"The salad and the horse-radish sauce for the beef will, I know, be intrusted to no less skilful hands than your own."

Within five minutes from the disappearance of his better-half, the doctor was fast asleep, with a napkin over his blooming countenance ; while his youthful guest, with eyes sadly fixed upon the fire, was pondering upon the wretchedness of human life.

CHAPTER XII.

MONSIEUR DE LERNAY.

MANY social luxuries, however harmless in themselves, have this disadvantage, that it is often inexpedient to indulge in them. The Indian princes, who, a few years ago, were the lions of a London season, complained bitterly that they were not permitted to hamstring their own attendants, but were compelled to wait until their departure from this miscalled land of liberty, when the amiable caprice might have altogether died away. The custom of relieving the mind by interjections, or, in other words, by profane swearing, is open to the same objection ; so is that of reciting pieces from the dramatists, which seems to be almost a necessity with some individuals ; so is that of smoking—even the most delicate tobacco being excluded from many places, such as

the family-pew ; and so, also—to take a very common case, indeed—is the habit of going to sleep after dinner. Nothing can be pleasanter in itself, or less objectionable, one would think, to others : the body is in complete repose—the handkerchief over the face almost suggestive of the last long Repose of all, indeed, but for the defiant breathing which generally accompanies this luxury ; the mind is at ease ; the spiritual essences, if any, are untaxed and dormant ; the digestion only is at work. And yet this harmless and delightful state of things cannot always be indulged in. When you go out to dinner, unless the whole of the party (males) are addicted to the custom, and prepared to go to sleep likewise—which, under the present and imperfect system of affairs, almost never happens—you *must* keep awake after the banquet. If you are yourself the host, this is still more incumbent on you, and especially if you have but few guests. With one man, indeed—if there is no particular reason for being civil to him—you can say: “Excuse me, while I just take forty winks ;” and if you have a greater revenue *per annum* than he—which I am supposing

to be the case—he will never venture to disturb you.

When I was a young fellow of sixteen or so, I had once the honour—in the capacity of nephew to one of the parties—of dining alone with two very funded persons, the one being a railway director, and the other a governor of the Bank of England. They were equally rich, and consequently very courteous to one another, although not particularly so to me. After dinner, the conversation was carried on by fits and starts, as each woke up from a few delicious seconds of unconsciousness to a sense of his indecorous conduct. At last, the guest took courage to observe, that he could not think what made him so drowsy that evening, unless it was the wind being in the south-east. “My very dear sir,” returned the host with rapture, “the south-east wind has the very same effect in my case. Now, if you like just to take a little nap, don’t mind *me*.” In half a minute after this most satisfactory explanation, the happy pair were snoring like a couple of grampuses ; and I had finished the second bottle of port and all the

walnuts before they woke up, and simultaneously exclaimed "that they did not know when they had last done such a thing as go to sleep after dinner—certainly not for years."

In the case of the Principal of Minim Hall, we have seen that the presence of his freshman did not in the least deter him from his post-prandial slumber ; he had muttered some indistinct apology with "unusually fatigued" in it, and gone off like a lamb, having decently covered his face with a napkin. But upon the next evening there was no such luck for Dr. Hermann. M. de Lernay was not a man to be affected by the south-east wind, nor to make allowance for people who were affected by it. He was a wit, he was a *raconteur* ; he had had the most extraordinary experiences of men, and, indeed, of women also, and he was not backward in relating them. He spoke English excellently well, with only just so much of accent as gave to his remarks a sort of piquant simplicity that was irresistible. Mr. Frederick Galton found such a pleasure in listening to him as he had not imagined his desolated existence

could be capable of entertaining. He was charmed out of himself and his grief, held by the glittering eye and facile tongue of the French nobleman. M. de Lernay was of the blood of Clovis, that was certain. Frederick did not quite know how he had become aware of this circumstance ; whether it had been cursorily alluded to by M. de Lernay himself, or stated in a confidential aside by Dr. Hermann ; but he would have made affidavit of the fact with cheerful promptitude. There was an affectionate candour about the Frenchman, which could not be resisted ; the confidences of a youth of Frederick's own age could not have been more natural than were those of his new acquaintance ; nor his light-heartedness more unaffected and complete if he had been in years the undergraduate of a year's standing, which he was in the books of the college. And yet M. de Lernay must have been—forty, fifty, sixty—it was impossible to say what age. Forty, to judge by his appearance ; sixty and more, when you listened to his personal experiences. He could recall the entrance of his beloved master, Louis XVIII., into Paris. He pictured the pale

Duchess d'Angoulême sitting by that monarch's side, but untriumphant, sick with the memories of the past—her own long imprisonment, and the murder of her unhappy mother—in a manner that well-nigh affected the Principal of Minim Hall to tears ; how much more, then, the impressionable Frederick ! With the Count d'Artois—afterwards Charles X.—M. de Lernay had been hand and glove ; he spoke of him as Clarendon might have discoursed of his royal master. The topic of Courts seemed to elevate his style above that of a mere narrator. Once only did he give any sign of the mere partisan ; the young man had asked some question relative to Louis Philippe, and a scowl came down upon the Frenchman's smiling face like a thunder-cloud in a summer sky.

It was not easy to excite the interest of the Principal of Minim Hall, whose thoughts, naturally sluggish, were generally pre-occupied with the sense of his own importance ; but he paid tribute, in “the hushed amaze of hand and eye,” to the conversational powers of his alien guest. He had been accustomed for so many years

to the talk of men of his own calibre, most potent, grave, and reverend seniors of the university, that he was taken by storm by the brilliancy and vigour of this man, who, compared to those natures, was as an electric eel to carp, or rather, perhaps, to those lethargic gold-fish, which circumnavigate their little globe of glass so unremittingly under the impression that that is the World.

Even Mrs. Hermann herself wore a look of satisfaction, as though she felt that M. de Lernay was honourably liquidating his dinner obligations; and ever and anon she turned a triumphant eye to Frederick, as though she would have said: "What a treat is this that has thus been gratuitously provided for you!"

The fifth person present at that table was not behind the rest in acknowledging the enchanter's power. Miss de Lernay listened to her father with an attentive interest, such as a British Paterfamilias can seldom, indeed, obtain for his twice-told tales, from the members of his family. She *must* have heard some of them before; his stock of recollections could not possibly

have been inexhaustible and ever new. He could not have improvised his stories, and spun them spider-like—to use Mr. Jonathan Johnson's metaphor—out of his own interior; no literary stomach—not even that of the prolific Mr. Sala—could have stood it. Yet there she sat, rapt in the paternal reminiscences, as though they had never met her ear before. Her face, naturally very pale, was tinged with the rose, her hazel eye aglow with excitement—the very picture of beauty enthralled. Mr. Frederick Galton observed that she was beautiful, and that was all. That chamber of the heart in which we keep the lovely images of the softer sex was, in his case, entirely pre-occupied by a very different, although, perhaps, no less exquisite creature. The English primrose is a flower that may well hold its own, even when compared with the lily of France.

M. de Lernay was not displeased that the loveliness of his daughter was unable to distract the young man's attention from his own conversation. He took it as a great compliment to his genius. He did not know that the affections of the youth were pre-engaged, nor, if he

had been told, would he have believed that such a circumstance could have greatly altered the matter. The French courtier did not put faith in the fidelity of the young. He had not, perhaps, a great deal of faith in anything—except in M. de Lernay; although this was by no means offensively conspicuous. He paid every deference to the prejudices of the Doctor of Divinity, and the presumed innocence of the juvenile Frederick. He had the faculty of becoming instinctively aware of the opinions of those among whom he found himself, and however opposite to these his own might be, they were never suffered to clash with them. If he had chanced to meet with an advocate of Cannibalism, he would probably have detected some common ground of agreement in taste, and certainly evolved many original, and therefore valuable facts, to form the raw material for future conversation. When he discovered that Mr. Frederick Galton entertained Republican sentiments—which he himself detested infinitely more than cannibalism—he had nothing more severe to remark, than that he had never yet met any young man

of really great promise who did not lean towards democracy. It was the divine yearning of youth, as yet untrammelled by conventionalities, after universal goodwill.

"Well, I was a Tory myself," observed the doctor, "from the first moment that I began to think at all."

For one instant there flashed across the Frenchman's face a gleam of cynical humour, that made itself reflected in the face of Frederick ; and this completed his victory over the young man, who keenly felt the compliment of being credited with a more lively intelligence than the Principal of Minim Hall. Then M. de Lernay gravely explained, that in the particular case of Dr. Hermann's youth, which could not, of course, have been otherwise than promising, early study had enabled him to draw solid historical deductions, while other young folks were building theirs with unstocked brains.

There was a rustle of silk, and the ladies rose to depart. As Frederick opened the door for them, he read in the smileless bow of the younger that there was a third person aware of the sarcasm passed upon

the doctor, and that she did not admire the supple readiness with which he had enlisted himself against his host. There are few faces which can exhibit at a glance reproof, contempt, and disappointment for the shortcomings of one of whom we have formed a better opinion, but Frederick Galton could read all these in that one look of Eugenie de Lernay. The colour flew to his cheek, as it will do with the knowledge of having committed a baseness, in those who are not used to such things ; and it was a comfort to him to see that she perceived it, and was already sorry for the necessity that had thus brought blood upon a skin so sensitively tender.

It was strange that so devoted a daughter should have been the cause of depreciation of her parent ; but from that moment Frederick began to regard M. de Lernay with considerably less admiration. Hazel was a fine colour—although not, indeed, so tender as blue—and of what a depth of expression was it capable ! Mary Perling's eyes could never have shot forth such a glance as that ; though, indeed, why should they ?—the

dear eyes that were only intended to give love for love.

Mons. de Lernay, as though he had divined these thoughts, fell to talking of feminine beauty. He politely maintained that, charming as were the ladies of his own land, there was more true beauty in England than in France.

"We have Miss de Lernay in England, now," observed the doctor gallantly, "so that the balance at present may very well be on our side."

"I have never been abroad," replied Frederick, "but I have always understood that for beauty the Spanish ladies bore away the bell from all. I have seen gipsies at fairs and feasts in our own county, who, but for a lack of refinement, would be the most beautiful creatures I can imagine; and are not Spaniards a sort of refined gipsies?"

"They are all alike," returned the other contemptuously. Among a score of Spanish women a Spaniard could scarcely recognise his own wife—a fact which should be some extenuation for the reputed looseness

of morals in the Peninsula. All conventional notions of foreign female beauty—and I have had some little experience," grinned the Frenchman—"I believe to be quite false and ill-founded."

"But surely," urged Frederick, laughing, "I am to take for granted what my "Pinnock's Geography" tells me, and in which all rudimentary ethnological authorities agree, that Circassia contains the loveliest of the Sex, and Constantinople"—

For the second time that evening, a scowl came over the Frenchman's face that was terrible to look upon, and the young man stopped involuntarily; at the same time, the heel of the doctor, at whose left hand he sat, came down upon his foot with unmistakable energy. A stupid youth would have hallooed out: "Don't kick me, Dr. Hermann!" a shy one would have remained speechless, under the consciousness of having somehow committed himself beyond redemption; but Frederick contrived to conclude his sentence carelessly enough with the remark, that "to whatever nation they might belong, admiration was probably equally acceptable to all females."¹

"Not only acceptable, but necessary and essential to their happiness," observed M. de Lernay. "Even when it would seem to be a totally hopeless undertaking to bid for the favour of man, a woman never despairs. I will tell you a very curious example of this, which came under my own knowledge when I was a young student in Paris. At that period, masks were very much in fashion, and not only was this the case at public entertainments, but even at private houses it was usual to give masked balls. The greatest vigilance had, of course, to be exercised on entrance, where each person was compelled to show his or her card of invitation, and also to write down their names; but the respectability of the company being thus assured, such parties had certainly a greater piquancy than those at which you knew everybody at first sight. Great cleverness was often exhibited in concealing one's identity, and detecting that of others; while, in the case of strangers, it was not unusual for a couple who had made themselves very agreeable to one another, to unmask, that each might become acquainted with

the features of so charming a partner. This was, of course, effected in some secluded corner, or behind a pillar; and it was understood that if the parties should meet on any future occasion, it should rest with the lady to make recognition of the gentleman, or not, as she pleased. These disclosures were in rare instances not a little disappointing; but I am thankful to say that in my youth I possessed a sort of instinct for beauty which never led me to throw away my attention upon objects that were unworthy of it, except in one remarkable instance.

"I had met a certain blue-velvet mask at least half-a-dozen times, and had always found her particularly lively and agreeable. She had a ringing musical laugh, which thrilled through me like the song of a bird, and certified, at least, that my unknown partner was young and light-hearted. I knew, too, she must be well connected, since I met her at the best houses in my visiting-list, and it was not so easy to go everywhere in Paris as it is now. She danced most exquisitely, and had evidently the nicest ear for music.

But the provoking part of her was, that I could never get her to unmask. Upon my second meeting, I had indiscreetly gone the length of unmasking myself; but, although I had no reason to imagine that she was otherwise than pleased (for, alas! I was as well favoured as is this young gentleman here, in those days), she would by no means reciprocate the compliment. I do not say that I was in love with one whom I had never seen, but I was greatly piqued at her obstinacy, which caused me to devote myself to her all the more. One evening, at the hotel of the Spanish ambassador, the sprightliness and wit of my incognita were more irresistible than ever. We had got to talk of all kinds of subjects by this time, and even to continue a conversation at the point at which we left it off at our last meeting.

“Her information was deep and various, considering her tender years, which I was convinced—and rightly, as it turned out—could not much exceed seventeen, and her judgment singularly logical. Upon this occasion, she well nigh drove me mad, because she would not

condescend to show the reality of that countenance, about which I had made so many rapturous guesses. In the end, we quarrelled about it. I had the madness to protest, upon the word of a gentleman, that I would never speak to her again after that night, if she did not unmask. I could see that this affected her powerfully, and therefore I repeated the threat with even greater emphasis.

“‘Then,’ replied she, with an inexpressible melancholy; ‘we shall never converse again, for I have sworn to myself that you shall never look upon my face.’

“It was impossible to doubt her determination, and I was exceedingly sorry that my importunity had brought matters to such a crisis. ‘Stay,’ cried I; ‘I vowed I would never speak to you again if you did not unmask; I did not say, unless I saw your face. You can turn your back to me, and uncover your features without my seeing them, and thus both our resolves will be kept, and yet we shall not lose each other’s society, which in *my* case (for men were polite

in those days) would be equivalent to a death-doom.'

"We were quite alone when I spoke this. She stepped from me some ten paces, so that I could not have secured her domino, had I intended such a breach of good manners, turned her back to me, and unmasked. I thought I should have swooned upon the spot. Luckily my own mask was on, which prevented my features from exhibiting the disgust at what I beheld, and which it was impossible they could have concealed.

"I had made my proposition to the poor girl because there was an immense mirror at the end of the apartment, which, as she had her back to it while she spoke, she had not herself perceived. I foresaw that I should see the reflection of her countenance quite clearly, and, ah Heaven! I did. It is unnecessary to shock you with the description of what was indeed most horrible. She replaced her mask, and turned towards me, and then, although I did not speak, or betray myself in any way, as I thought, and though, as I have said, I was

masked, she perceived that I knew her secret, and dropped insensible on the floor. A crowd of course collected: but I would suffer no one to remove her domino; and presently two ladies, who were her relations, came up, and taking her into their charge, carried her off from the ball."

"But what was the matter?" inquired the Principal and the Freshman in the same breath.

"The poor girl's countenance was such as your poet Moore describes as belonging to the false prophet Mokanna; and I really felt exceedingly like Zelica when she took her first look at it. I afterwards learnt her history. Her countenance had been mutilated by some terrible disease, which had attacked her almost in infancy, and she had undergone with marvellous fortitude the most frightful operations, with scarcely any benefit. At eleven years of age it was impossible that she could appear in public except masked, and yet she had the greatest longing for society, and amusements of all kinds. She had taught herself drawing by watching, through a glass door, the lessons imparted

to her sisters. The love of admiration in women could scarcely be more powerfully illustrated than in the case of this unhappy girl."

"And what became of the poor young creature, eventually?" inquired Frederick.

"She died, sir: she danced no more; she was consumed, I fear, by a hopeless passion for myself," replied the Frenchman, sighing.—"What Maderia is this, Dr. Hermann! It is a wine we seldom get in such perfection in France."

As is the case with most great conversationalists, there was a secret chamber in M. de Lernay's mind, from which he delighted to bring forth hideous skeletons, and dangle them in chains before his terrified but entranced little audiences. The door being once opened for the above recital, a troop of other horrors followed upon its heels, and all professing to be part of the personal experience of the narrator himself. This is perhaps—singular as it may appear to ladies—the most seductive sort of after-dinner talk; for all of us males, no matter what our other tastes may be, entertain a

liking for such subjects, and are very ready to believe that Life is not, after all, so commonplace a matter as it seems, but that tragedy is to be found everywhere, even in omnibuses—as in the late Mr. Greenacre's case, who carried his wife's head in a handkerchief, for a considerable distance, in one of those public conveyances.

So entralling did M. de Lernay prove, in the capacity of Shocking Story-teller, that Euphemia sent in twice, in vain, to let the gentlemen know that tea was awaiting them in the drawing-room: the third summons being imperative, and having something of the nature of an ultimatum, was reluctantly obeyed.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE YOUNG SQUIRE.

Of the four hundred and odd young gentlemen who matriculate at Camford yearly, I wonder what proportion expect to distinguish themselves in the eyes of Alma Mater. We know by the University Calendar that about one-third of these attain what are believed by their friends to be mathematical and classical honours. But what, after all, is a *junior op.* in the former list, or a *third-class* in the latter? In the eyes of the Master of St. Boniface, we know, "it is only to have escaped disgrace;" and indeed they are not exalted positions, save in the opinion of Mothers, Sisters, and Beloved Objects. One or two hard readers may sometimes slip down into those lower regions by accident, as one or two great geniuses may

be found elevated into them—rapt into the honour list, almost contrary to their own expectations—but upon the whole, we must hold the company there to be but mediocre. Confining success, therefore, to the first classes in each department, it may be calculated that not more than one-fifth of the men who come up to Camford do credit to themselves in the great university fight, and satisfy their backers. It is not to be supposed, however, that the remaining four-fifths are disappointed men. The majority of these never intended to read for honours at all; some, because they are aware that Providence has put the temptation of being unduly elevated by intellectual distinctions out of their power, and others for want of any ambition whatever in that direction. All these are well content with “the poll,” or ordinary degree. A few have not even the humble goal of becoming a Bachelor of Arts in view.

Lord Fitzperiwinkle and his noble friends, on their arrival at college, behold a couple of university years before them undimmed by a single cloud in the way of

examinations. Camford demands of them no "little go," being content with the warrant of their splendid lineage. After nourishing them in her bosom for seven terms, she will make their final exit as easy for them as possible, and dub them Masters of Arts upon the spot, to which title those of meaner birth cannot attain under three times that period. Their lordships, therefore, need have little in view beyond the vista of enjoyment. Young Limpet, again, the sporting fishmonger's son, has little in view but their lordships themselves. He came up to Camford for a degree indeed, but it is neither that of Bachelor nor of Master, and far less that of Doctor of Divinity; it is the degree Social which he is in quest of. He wishes to rub off his fishmonger's scales by contact with Fitzperiwinkle and the rest of them. His natural inclination for this course of conduct is strengthened by the paternal admonition. Limpet, senior (in whose eye money has still some value, although it is popularly said to be "no object" to him), has paid double entrance-fees for the lad, and is prepared to pay double everything

throughout his university career, in order that he may have greater opportunities for cultivating the acquaintance of the nobility. He enters Limpet, junior, as a fellow-commoner; buys a gown for him, wonderful to behold, blue, and bespangled with stars like the firmament itself; and a cap that is appropriate to the same. More fishmongers, grocers, tailors, and other respectable persons do the like.

Some have not chosen to invest so large a capital in their offspring, but have entered them as pensioners only, as mere country gentlemen, clergymen, and others are content to do; in which case, they cannot, of course, look for such satisfactory returns. But the object of the majority of this class is the same—namely, the forming of what they call a “fashionable connexion”—a phrase taken directly out of their annual circulars. Another set of freshmen, who have no ulterior views connected with the senate-house, are wealthy scapegraces, whom their parents or guardians know not what to do with, but send them up to Camford, as being upon the whole the safest place for their vagaries—the

softest spot that can be selected for the catastrophe, when the expected overturn does take place.

A few young lunatics, who desire to embrace some calling, such as literature, or going to sea, of which they will perceive the absurdity in a year or two, are sent up to the university for the purpose of distracting their thoughts. And to these must be added one or two who, like Mr. Frederick Galton, have fixed their immature affections upon some ineligible female, the recollection of whom it is hoped that Alma Mater will eradicate.

Finally, there are always some young gentlemen of good family and position, whom nature has nevertheless persistently attached to rat-catching and other ignoble pursuits of the like nature, and who are consigned to the university in order to acquire a “gentlemanly tone;” and to this class, in the year of which we write, Mr. John Meyrick, junior, of the Grange, Casterton, Downshire, most unquestionably belonged. Although a year older than his companion Frederick, young Meyrick was still a schoolboy in mind and behaviour, and

by no means in a very smooth condition for receiving Camford polish : he was dictatorial, bearish, and obstinate : he shrank from the society of his equals in birth, because he knew that they would in all other respects be his superiors. However Mr. Meyrick, senior, might affect to despise Frederick Galton, he was not unaware of the humanising influence which that young gentleman had hitherto exercised upon his son. He had long made up his mind that when the former went to college, the latter should accompany him ; and certain circumstances which had occurred subsequent to Frederick's departure had caused the squire to put his determination into immediate effect.

No sooner had the doctor's son been despatched to Minim Hall, than his late companion at Casterton began to experience an insupportable ennui. His horse remained idly in the stall, for he had nobody to ride races with him on the Downs, and his coursing-matches had lost half their interest, now that he could not exhibit his superior sagacity—for Bill and Bob unhappily knew much more upon the subject than he did.

This is a drawback incidental to all amateur sporting : a gentleman jock may have an excellent seat, but never so good a one as the professional. The best rider in the hunting-field is generally the one that is there to sell his horse. The lord of the manor may be a good shot, but his keeper is a better, although he may be too judicious to disclose the fact ; while as for the scientific fisherman, with his pocket-book full of supernaturally attractive flies, there is not a poacher in the stream he whips with his thirty-guinea rod, but can catch, with an original outlay of five shillings, two fish for his one.

Still, Bill and Bob were all that were now left to the young gentleman, and he was inseparable from one or other of them all day.

In the evening, too, he fled from the drawing-room of the Grange, and sought them in the saddle-room. It seemed better to him there to reign than to serve, or at least to play second fiddle to papa, in the more gorgeous apartment.

From the saddle-room there was generally an adjournment to the *Meyrick Arms*. Our Tony Lumpkin was

unfortunate in this his favourite house of entertainment, inasmuch as it was a very sorry one. If the wicked Buckingham had ended his days at Casterton, the bitter lines in which his memory is chiefly preserved could scarcely have been written: "In the worst inn's worst room" would have been a worse exaggeration even than it really is, for there was but one inn in the village, and that had but one room in it. In that apartment, however, assembled the chief "spirits" of the neighbourhood, who had generally spent the day in the dry skittle-alley attached to the premises. The conversation may not have been edifying, but it was not displeasing to the young squire—no, not even when it happened to have for its topic that little love-episode between his friend and Miss Mary Perling.

If the wily curate really intended to keep that matter quiet, he must have been sanguine indeed; and we may well imagine, without it being described, how tenderly the "spirits" touched upon an event so romantic.

The distance between the Grange and the *Meyrick*

Arms was considerable ; in going to the latter place, the nearer way was unquestionably across the fields at the back of the mansion ; but in returning, the village street was found to possess that advantage. This curious circumstance arose from the fact, that Mr. John Meyrick, junior, was wont to start tolerably sober, but to come back more or less intoxicated, in which condition the footway over the fields, being narrow and winding, was difficult to keep.

On one particular occasion, the young squire and Bob, the stable "help," had imbibed very much more than was good for them. They had drowned in the flowing bowl not only Care but commonest Prudence ; and yet, despite the solemn and reiterated warnings of their boon-companion Bill, who, being aware of his own diagonal tendency, kept to the village street, they attempted to return home by the fields.

The night was not dark, but the ditches were many, and the lofty stiles all leaned, or seemed to lean, towards them, so that their advance was tardy in the extreme : moreover, every obstacle was set down by each as having

been artfully contrived by the other, and not, as was in truth the case, by the arts of husbandry and irrigation.

The most revengeful and malicious feelings were thus naturally, however unreasonably, excited in both their breasts. A weighty hedge-stake, which had once formed the angle of a sheepfold, stuck in the field by the wayside, suggested to the mind of Mr. John Meyrick, junior, who was walking in the rear, that it would be a capital weapon wherewith to avenge himself upon his enemy: having therefore, with considerable difficulty, pulled it out of the ground, he trailed it cunningly behind him, with the intention, when he should get near enough, of hitting Bob with it, as hard as he possibly could, on the back of his head. This design, though ingeniously conceived, he had not the intelligence to execute. He was unable, upon Bob's unexpectedly turning round, to conceal this monstrous club with his body, or to throw into his countenance such an air of careless innocence as might have dissipated suspicion. On the contrary, the formidable stable-help made at him furiously at once, exclaiming: "Oh! you would, would

you, you young varmint!" and did so beat him, then and there, with the bludgeon that had been provided for his own destruction, that he left the incipient squire battered and prone on the turnip-field—arriving at his quarters over the stables an hour or two later, with the hedge stake, and in the most excellent spirits. So far, however, from participating in his triumph, William, the groom, who had passed the time since he had parted with his young master in no little anxiety, immediately knocked Bob down, locked him up in the coach-house (where he lay for some hours under the gravest suspicions of having committed an unnatural murder), and roused the house. A search being instituted, Mr. John Meyrick, junior, was discovered upon his back addressing the turnip-tops in a humorous but disconnected speech, under the impression that he was still at the public-house among his friends. There was not much physical harm done, after all, but the moral shock communicated to the Grange was very considerable. Although Mr. Meyrick, senior, was, considering his social position, not only an uneducated but an absolutely

illiterate man, his family pride revolted against low company. Though he somewhat shrank from the society of those of his own rank and large possessions in the county, he had never sought that of his inferiors, and there had always been a proper distance observed by the Bills and Bobs of his youth. Mrs. Meyrick, too, although she could not believe that her son had ever taken an over-abundance of liquor in his life, and opined that his conduct upon the occasion in question had been traduced by calumniators, and his precious life all but destroyed by a bloodthirsty assassin, still perceived that the sooner dearest John should associate with his compeers, the nobility and gentry of England, at the university, the better. His frankness, his freedom from pride, and the charming sociality of his disposition would, she foresaw, be so many sources of danger to him, so long as he resided at Casterton ; and, both the higher powers being thus agreed, they applied to Mr. Robert Morrit for the *lettre de cachet* that should consign their offspring to the cloister for his own good.

Within a very short period, therefore, Dr. Hermann

was requested to receive a second freshman in a by-term, and Minim Hall began to assume unwonted proportions as a collegiate institution. There were now no less than five undergraduates within that stately pile, if we include M. de Lernay, who, however, as we have said, occupied a house in the town. Mr. Meyrick brought his son up two or three days before the term began—as soon as his youthful frame, in fact, had recovered itself from the punishment of the stake—and stayed with him for that space at Camford. They dined with the hospitable Principal, and afterwards in Hall with Frederick and the Frenchman, who, like Orpheus, could charm even stocks and stones, and delighted them accordingly.

The old country squire, having thus placed his offspring, as he thought, in polite security, was in a humour to be pleased. He had not himself been a university man, and therefore felt none of those divine regrets that the most prosaic of elderly gentlemen can rarely be free from who brings his son up to the same spot wherein he has passed his own hot youth. Ah me,

what memories throng the paternal breast in such a case, undreamed of by the son ! He does not give credit to the "governor," perhaps, for entertaining sentimental emotions at all ; but, at all events, it is quite impossible that the lad should appreciate them. He cannot imagine, as he perambulates the town with his father—the one in his brand-new academicals, the other in an old gown hired from the tailor's shop—why the old gentleman should pause at this or that (to him) uninteresting spot, and be silent, and not hear the words he speaks to him.

He conceives with dutiful sorrow that the governor is growing deaf, which he has suspected to be the case for some time. "Not deaf, my boy," the father might reply (only that he is a great deal too sensible to do so)—"not deaf; but listening to the voices of the dead, and to the echoes of the music of my youth ; for I, too, have been young. although you cannot picture it, and have had young men for my friends in this same dear old place (as I trust you may have); and some are in heaven, and some are still upon earth ; but we shall

never be friends together again as we were *here*.” Grace, beauty, youth, and a fashionable apparel are not absolutely essential to the possession of feelings such as these. There is often a great deal more pathos in an old fogey of even sixteen stone than his nearest relatives have any idea of. He may return to his muttons and his beeves, to his freehold and his copyhold, his pasture and his arable, upon the very next day, having seen his boy bestowed, perhaps, in the same rooms wherein he himself had passed the three happiest years of his own existence long, long ago; but that visit to Camford, while it lasted, jerked his tough old heartstrings cruelly. Mr. Meyrick, senior, however, as we know, had long ago reached sixteen stone, and his shadow had by no means diminished since; while, had it been otherwise, there were no memories to jerk his heartstrings in the contemplation of Camford.

“ You are two lucky young fellows, and have fallen on your feet with a vengeance here,” said the stout squire, as he sipped his port before the fire, in the pleasant dining-chamber of Minim Hall. “ With this

good gentleman from France as a companion, and no women to make mischief among ye—eh, Master Frederick, eh!—you ought to be as happy as skylarks; although, indeed, as respects the ladies, when I have had my wine, and feel inclined for a snooze, I like to have a tune or two upon the piano as well as most things.”

“If you, my dear sir, and your son, will honour my humble residence with your company this evening,” observed M. de Lernay warmly, “it will, I am sure, give my daughter the greatest pleasure to play for you such simple airs as she is mistress of. I do not ask *you*, Mr. Galton, because we are old friends already, and I hope you need no such invitation.”

Frederick blushed to the roots of his hair as he replied that he felt this to be the case; and, turning to his two friends, explained to them how, coming up as a total stranger to that almost deserted town, he had already received from M. de Lernay and his daughter the most kind and genial hospitalities. He expressed his gratitude with characteristic enthusiasm, but really

without at all overstating the case. Not a day had passed since he had met the De Lernays at the Principal's without their taking compassion on his lonely condition, and entertaining him at their own house. He had very willingly taken advantage of this kindness. The company of his own thoughts was insupportable; not only had he no one in whom to confide his sorrows, but he was pledged to abstain from putting them on paper, or rather, he might write them—as, indeed, he did, in every variety of metre—but only for his own eyes.

Moved by the excessive grief of his father at parting, he had made a voluntary promise that he would not write to Mary Perling for the space of half a year; and he had communicated this resolve to her in a letter, approved of by the doctor himself, but the contents of which had been carefully concealed from the Rev. Robert Morrit.

Mr. Galton, senior, stood in terror of the anathemas which that uncompromising divine would have certainly hurled against him, had he known that even

belligerent rights had been ceded to the young woman at Oldborough. He would have ignored her very existence. To such an individual, he would have held that Mr. Frederick Galton could not have written a letter upon equal terms, either six months hence, or after cycles of ages.

“MY DEAR MARY—An event that we feared has come to pass. My good father says that I shall forget you in six months’ time. Do you think that possible? No, indeed. Let us see, however. In the meantime, I have promised not to write to you. Ah me, what years of sorrow I have already seemed to endure since last I saw you!—Yours ever,

“FREDERICK GALTON.”

This was the original manuscript; but the doctor had obtained the erasure of the sentence beginning “Ah me,” &c., as hyperbolical, and likely to produce unnecessary anxiety, the period of absence, calculated by the ordinary measures of time, being exactly four-and-thirty hours.

Under these unhappy circumstances, it may be well imagined how grateful to Frederick Galton was such society as that of M. de Lernay and his charming daughter. If he had not been rendered happy under their roof, they had not, at least, permitted him to be miserable. The companionship of a beautiful girl, accomplished in all the arts that adorn existence, cannot be otherwise than attractive to any youth, no matter how solemnly he may be engaged to another young female at a distance. Her conversation was only less agreeable than that of her father, while it abounded with evidences of inartificial and honest feeling, which Monsieur de Lernay lacked. In his presence, and, indeed, in society generally, she spoke little; but at home, and upon subjects of which she was mistress, she talked readily and well. Gleams of satirical wit, reminding her hearers of her parentage as forcibly as any likeness of feature could have done, flashed forth occasionally from her lips; but her ordinary mood was serious, and if left to herself, and, as she thought, unnoticed, a keen observer might perceive her mind was dwelling on

some sorrow. Frederick Galton was not so pre-occupied with his own woes but that his quick eye soon discovered this, and the knowledge of it attracted him to her all the more. She would be better able, having some sorrow of her own, to sympathize with an unhappy wretch such as himself; and she had sympathized with him, and the wretch had accordingly become decidedly less unhappy. He had sat beside her harp, and, like another David, she had for a time enticed the spirit of melancholy to leave him. She had told him fascinating stories of foreign life out of her own experience (and in this gift of narration she was more like her father than in anything), and he had listened as a boy who sits at the feet of a beloved elder sister, entranced alike by the tale and the teller. They differed, too, sufficiently to produce those arguments, which are always satisfactory when taking place between the sexes, unless the parties happen to be husband and wife. He would put to her supposititious circumstances, somewhat parallel to his own, and demand her opinion upon them; and she—sweet

casuist—would meet his expectations with a defeat so winning, that it was almost a victory for himself. She had no great respect for King Cophetua in his relation to the beggar maid, nor for the Lord of Burleigh with regard to the village lass. Both monarch and nobleman were in her eyes but self-willed, impulsive persons, who had married in a hurry. Without some evidence as to how the king and queen got on afterwards in domestic life, she refused to concede that he had done right in thus allying himself; in the Burleigh case, the event had shown that the lady was not strong enough for the place.

As for any greatness of soul in either gentleman, she could see nothing of that. They had, each of them, money and rank enough for two, and had nobody but their own inclinations to consult in the matter; there were no interests but their own at stake. (Frederick gave a little shudder at this.) No; if Mr. Galton wanted an example of nobility of purpose, and true contempt of conventionality, she would be happy, out of her own personal knowledge, to offer him one that

no poets had yet rendered unreal. (And here she smiled, archly enough, for she loved the poets as well as did Mr. Frederick Galton himself.) "A young English officer of the cavalry, greatly attached to his profession, and a favourite with all his regiment, suddenly sold out, and left it; no one knowing for what reason. The mess missed him, and regretted him, but after a little, utterly forgot him, as men do forget all things in time. Years afterwards, a captain, upon going his rounds, perceived a new recruit in his troop, with whose face he was not altogether unfamiliar: he did not recognise it, but only concluded that he must have somewhere seen a picture that was like it. Long afterwards, when the recruit had won for himself a commission, and the captain was colonel, the newly-made cornet reminded the latter how very nearly he had been discovered by him when he had first re-entered his dear old regiment as a private.

"'What! are you So-and-so?' cried the colonel.
'Why, what on earth induced you to go masquerading
in this fashion?'

"‘Family circumstances,’ returned the other quietly. ‘I tried other things, but my heart always yearned to the scarlet, and especially to my dear old regiment ; so, since I could no longer command in it, I came back to serve.’

“The real fact was that his mother had suddenly fallen into poor circumstances ; he had disposed of his commission, and applied the proceeds to her necessities, and began life over again on his own account, and with scarce a shilling in addition to that which the king gave him when he enlisted. The Lord of Burleigh would scarcely have done *that*, I fancy, Mr. Galton.”

This is but an example of the sort of talk which Eugenie would hold with the young freshman when they were not arguing (but not as lawyers do), or he was not listening to her harp, or she to his poems, for Frederick was dreadfully ready with his verses, and would recite them on the slightest provocation. So young, so fair, so good, so altogether charming did she appear to him, that he had more than once made up his mind to cast himself at her feet, and confide to her his

passionate love—for Mary Perling. For some reason or other, not distinctly known to himself, he postponed this declaration. Perhaps she might think so great a confidence, upon so slight an acquaintance, an impertinence; perhaps she would even decide against him, and take the same unsatisfactory view of the matter as did his father and uncle. At all events, the avowal might disturb the pleasant relations which the young lady and himself had established with one another, and it was most desirable that these should continue. Her society, he had persuaded himself, had become necessary to him, as is a tonic to one physically depressed, and it was welcome even when others shared it.

He was glad, therefore, when M. de Lernay invited Mr. Meyrick and his son to his house that evening, since, jarring as the presence of such people might be there, it was better than their absence, which must needs include his own. If he could but have looked into the future, however, even a little way—alas, alas !

If there had been but a Cassandra in the proctorless streets that night, to whisper “Murder! murder!” in

his ear, and hold a bloody dagger by the blade, its handle towards his hand——

“I tell you what it is,” observed Mr. Jack Meyrick to his quondam friend as they walked home to Minim Hall that night, after leaving the old gentleman at his inn, “that Eujenny’s a ripper, and just the sort of girl for my money.”

CHAPTER XIV.**THE SUPPER-PARTY.**

THE Lent Term was over, and the Easter Term, which is separated from it by an interval of some few days only, was drawing to a close. It was May, the carnival month of Camford, the blithest, brightest epoch in the undergraduate year. That poet must have surely passed his university-days there who first named it "Month of Flowers," and "the laughing May." The flowers may be in the windows only, which, indeed, are full of them, purveyed by nursery-men in market-carts with delicate white awnings, and forced in green-houses ; but the laughter is native to the place. The May Term is a smile of six weeks long, a ravishing symphony that concludes the harmonious reading year, and ushers in the long vacation. I hear its magic music as I write,

made up of all the sounds that most delight the young, from the yearning of the organ-thunder to the rustle of silk gowns—not Masters of Arts' gowns (though they have music for some ears), but those of lady-visitors, the angels who condescend to visit there the sons of men.

From the long lines of limes, the murmur of the innumerable bees comes dream-inspiring; from the winding river and echoing bridge, the silver splash of oars; from open windows, through the hyacinth and the rose, breaks laughter fitfully—the music of young hearts aglow with joy—and over all, the chimes, great Handel's chimes, clash night and day.

The very religion of the place is a poem, and removed from that of ordinary life. How different were the “high-built college fanes” in which Frederick Galton now worshipped (for the rules of Minim Hall were lax, and its own little pocket chapel was not well attended), to the whitewashed barn-like edifice at Casterton! How different the diamond-leaded panes of its village church from those which “blushed with saints and pious kings!”

How different its too enunciating parish clerk, who called the whale "the great lieutenant of the waters," to that responsive band of white-robed cherubim, who might have called it anything, in their mystic chant, without the slightest danger of detection. Again, as one who, used to bathe in some sequestered river pool, without one wave save that which is caused by his own immersion, comes to the brink of ocean, and plunges in amid the countless billows, and finds them strangely buoyant, so that he scarce can sink, but is upborne by the warm Thetis bosom, so from his village life and uncompanioned ways, the young man passed into the full flood of undergraduate life, and could not choose but spring to its surface. His wit, his kindness, and his good looks were as so many corks which would not have permitted a much more determined social suicide than he to drown. Reputations are very quickly made at a university, and Frederick Galton was carried triumphant on the top crest of the Freshman wave along with the best of its foam and sparkle.

The Rev. Robert Morrit was right in selecting Cam-

ford as one of the most likely places in the world to efface the remembrance of Casterton and its affairs ; if the colours of university life are so fresh and bright, and abiding on the canvas of the mind, as not to be obliterated by years of soberest manhood, how can the early tints which they overlay have force to struggle through them ? The memories of childhood, of boyhood, of calf-love—how can these survive the brilliant records of that epoch, when youth and friendship, and health and wealth, and poetry and good cheer all combine together to make us demigods ?

And yet Frederick Galton had not forgotten his quiet home, nor the old man, left very solitary there for lack of him, nor his uncle and friend in one ; nor the ancient Round, which he had sung so often, and peopled with its former garrisons ; nor Eden, and that simple girl in whose smile he had basked so lately, and to part with whom had seemed only a little less than death. He remembered Mary Perling, and his heart, whenever he did so, beat more quickly with that recollection still ; but he did not remember her always. His intentions

with regard to her were unaltered, but he could scarcely have advocated them with the passionate eloquence of a few months ago.

Time, the healer, was doing his work with him, whether for good or evil, as it must do for us all. We may shriek and tear our hair, and, casting ourselves down upon the grave-top, protest that underneath it lies our heart along with the beloved Dead ; but nevertheless it is not so. We do not easily forget, indeed, the lost one who was all in all to us, but in time we need to be reminded.

The pleasures and cares of this life choke the seed of Regret, which, unlike the grain of mustard-seed, is the greatest of all grains at the first, but dwindles day by day, until its place, the very heart in which it was sown, knows it no more.

In the mornings of those rare days when he was not invited to some breakfast party, Frederick Galton gave himself up to composition with greater or less success, for the benefit of the *Paternoster Porcupine*. The studies of Camford had little charms for him,

and as he was sufficiently master of them to ensure his passing the "Little Go," he did not much concern himself with them. One hour's attendance at the lecture delivered by the Vice-principal, Dean, Tutor and Bursar (in one), satisfied the demands of his college, and afterwards he was his own master for the day.

He wrote then until luncheon-time, after which he was certain to be called for by some pleasure-seeker to ride, to drive, to boat, or, if it was wet, to play at billiards. After Hall, he was always engaged to "wine," which generally turned out to be for the whole evening, so that there was really no time left wherein the young gentleman could *think* at all. Reading-men have their work to do at college; fast-men have their vices to employ them; Admirable Crichtons and popular favourites have, least of all, any time to bewail the tender misfortunes of their youth. To men of all kinds, therefore, Camford is the very grave of melancholy. Moreover, in Frederick's case, there was added to the various other causes of distraction, one very uncommon to the place—namely, a young

woman. Scarcely a single fine afternoon went by without some expedition being planned by land or water, whereof Eugenie de Lernay and her father formed a part, and out of which Mr. Meyrick, junior, could not be kept. M. de Lernay, professed to be interested in this young gentleman, who did not much contribute to the agreeableness of the company. He had, however, powerful sinews, and was "a good oar." They made him "bow" upon all water-parties; a position which kept him as far removed as possible from the principal personages, but at the same time permitted him to gaze upon the lovely Eugenie, which was all he asked. When not employed in this harmless occupation, he was continuously engaged in colouring pipes. Now, it is one of the peculiarities of tobacco that, whereas intelligent persons become more thoughtful under its influence, the dull dogs become stupified. It seems to intensify what is in each the characteristic. And in this respect, Camford life has often an exactly similar effect with tobacco. The youthful mathematician becomes there doubly

enamoured of his favourite science, the oarsman of boating, the cricketer of cricket, and the man with "a voice" (to his certain destruction, as far as university distinctions are concerned) of singing. Similarly, a vulgar-minded young fellow, if he happen to miss his opportunity of forming a good connexion at first, may get into a set at Camford which will encourage his very lowest propensities.

This was unhappily the case with Mr. John Meyrick. He was too proud and too obstinate to be the satellite of any individual, however notorious; but he had plenty of money, and could thereby attract a certain worthless circle around himself as a centre. His "rooms" (for they are always in the plural, although it is unusual for an undergraduate to possess more than one sitting apartment) were not less frequented, although by a different class, than those of his contemporary, Galton. These two could no longer be termed friends; their pursuits were too dissimilar, and, it may be, their opinions upon the merits of Miss Eugenie de Lernay too much alike, to admit of this.

Frederick was indignant that a man who lived so coarsely and viciously, as Meyrick made no secret of doing, should attach himself to so superior a being, and venture to speak of her with familiarity, particularly among his low associates. Meyrick, on the other hand, saw no disparity in the affair at all; for what she did not possess in any profusion—money—he did; and, moreover, he had a hazy notion that he was, genealogically speaking, a person of vast importance, which a Frenchman could scarcely be. He resented, of course, with much indignation, Galton's remonstrances upon this subject, and smarted, as he had never done before he knew this young lady, under the sense of his own inferiority to him. Eugenie was kind and pleasant to Mr. John Meyrick, as she was to everybody. But his share of her attentions was necessarily small in comparison with that of the young poet. Frederick and he had not had any decided quarrel as yet, but they were both very ripe for quarrelling.

On a certain evening during the boat-races, which at Camford take place in May, Meyrick had a large

supper-party in his rooms, at which Galton was present. He had made a point of being so because he had avoided him so much of late, and he knew that his father and uncle would both be displeased in case the squire's son and he should return to Casterton enemies. He arrived, however, rather late, after the men had sat down to table, and perceived, by the sudden silence at his entrance, and a "hush! hush!" which ran through the company, that they had been talking about himself. He was annoyed that any affairs of his should have been made the topic of conversation among the class of persons there assembled; but he seated himself next a boating-man with whom he had a slight acquaintance, and began to speak of the results of that day's racing. He was, however, by no means so occupied with the subject, or entranced with his neighbour's eloquence,* but that he could catch some words of a conversation which was being

* "They were putting their backs into it well enough, when No. 3 caught a crab, and the coxswain of our boat sings out—says he: 'Pull, you beggars, pull!' and we put on a spurt, and would have swamped hem as sure as eggs, only," &c.

carried on at the other end of the table, where sat the host ; peals of laughter now and then interrupted it, and glances of scornful mirth were surreptitiously thrown in Frederick's direction, which called the blood up to his cheek, though he refrained for some time from noticing them.

"A servant-maid—a slavey!" cried one, "and wanted to marry her! Well, that is a good one!"

"Can't conceive any gentleman doing such a thing," observed another, with that thickness of utterance which so materially detracts from the value of an opinion.

"A likely story," observed a third, in reply to some remark which did not reach Frederick's ears ; and then there was a roar of laughter.

The youthful mariner was excessively annoyed by these repeated interruptions of his tale, and asked his companion what those confounded fellows up there were sniggering about.

"What is the joke there, gentlemen?" inquired Frederick, with a distinctness which does not always

accompany loudness of speech at supper parties. "It is bad manners to have secret jokes in company."

"It would be a deuced deal worse to tell it!" shouted out a nautical person; whereupon there was a second tumult of laughter.

"They're talking about you," observed Frederick's neighbour—"that is the simple fact."

"Mr. Meyrick," said Galton, rising, "permit me to observe"—

"Hear, hear!" broke forth a chorus of drunken voices—"hear the orator."

"Cuss me, if he ain't going to propose his own health!" observed the Hon. Guy Drawlington, yawning.

"Easy, all!" remonstrated Mr. Stretcher Rullock—"let him pull it out!"

"I was about to remark, Mr. Meyrick, that it was scarcely becoming in a friend"—

"Oh, bother your friendship!" replied Meyrick huskily, and with an evil look in his eyes. "Who cares?"

"Everybody who is a gentleman cares, sir!" retorted

Galton angrily, "even though he may be a habitual drunkard."

Now, an excessive fondness for strong drinks was one of the weaknesses of Mr. John Meyrick's moral character that he was rather ashamed of, and did not make the subject of boast.

"You sentimental humbug!" cried he passionately, "don't try your hypocritical tricks on *us*, I beg. We know all about you here, *we* do—all about you and your dairy-maid. I should be ashamed to kiss and tell."

Frederick's fingers clutched a claret jug, and would have certainly launched it at the speaker, but for the interposition of Mr. Rullock's powerful hand.

"The man's drunk," whispered he to Frederick—"the whole crew are drunk except one or two. Ship your oars, my good fellow—ship your oars!"

Some other men had risen around him, and about the host there was a standing army of excited young fellows suggesting various lines of conduct for his consideration. "Apologize!"—"Kick him!"—"Challenge him to fight

with champagne corks!"—"Sit down and hold your tongue!"—"Send for the *purleece*, and a stretcher!"

In the midst of this scene of disorder, after much unanswered knocking at the door, entered the porter of the college, and whispered something in Frederick's ear.

"I don't hear you!" exclaimed the young man sharply, "these blackguards make such a noise. Speak out, man!"

"A lady from Oldborough wishes to see you immediately upon important business. She is waiting at the lodge-gate, sir, now."

"It's Mary Perling!" shrieked Meyrick derisively; "it's his precious dairy-maid come after him, you may take your oath of it."

A roar of inextinguishable-laughter burst from friends and foes at this sally. Frederick Galton cast such a look about him as some maddened bull who looks from matador to matador in indecisive fury; then rising abruptly from the table, he left the room, slamming its double-doors behind him, and followed the porter, who was already half-way down the stairs.

"Tell the lady I will be with her directly!" cried Galton, leaning over the banisters. "I am sorry I was rude to you, James."

"Oh, never mind *that*, sir," returned the porter, grinning. "When the wine is in—why; then, gentlefolks will be gentlefolks, we *knows*."

It was not wine, however, which was making the young man's brain reel, and changing his blood to flame; it was not wine which made his heart throb, so that he had need to press his hand upon it, like one in pain. Yet he went to his chamber, and bathed his burning head in water, and bared it to the cold night-air, as he walked across the grass-plot to the porter's lodge. There were passions at work within him, more intoxicating, more bewildering than was ever juice of grape. Fury, such as only a nature like his own was capable of entertaining, against John Meyrick and his ribald friends ; and reawakened Love, the stronger for its long sleep of late, and quickened into passionate life by the near presence of the Beloved Object. Something within him, too, was bidding him

take thought while yet there should be time ; while he yet stood *alone* under the blue vault of heaven and the quiet stars. His father, uncle, Eugenie, with her reproachful eyes—the images of all these crossed his brain, and each with a look of warning, ere he lifted the latch of the lodge-door.

"She is in here, sir," said the porter, as he ushered him into the little parlour. "This is Mr. Frederick Galton, the young gentleman as you was inquiring for ma'am."

A little old woman, attired in deep mourning, with a white worn face, set round with a close-fitting widow's cap, rose up as he entered, and said, very gravely : "I am Widow Perling, sir, Mary Perling's mother."

END OF VOL. I.



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